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ABSTRACT

Maintaining that good communication and sharp awareness of interpersonal dynamics can help facilitators of quality circles develop greater group synergy and thus more creative and productive results, this guide presents techniques and exercises for developing facilitators' interpersonal communication skills. A pretest and brief introduction are followed by sections devoted to improving communication skills, including recognizing differences in perception, effective listening, speaking clearly and concretely, using nonverbal information, responding to language that avoids involvement and responsibility, and dealing with questions. Specific guidelines for facilitating groups are discussed in terms of four functions of group leadership: traffic directing interventions, modeling, serving as interaction catalyst, and communication facilitating. A posttest is appended. (MJL)

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FACILITATION SKILLS IN QUALITY CIRCLES

prepared by
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June, 1982

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FOREWORD

Quality Circles (QC) are becoming increasingly popular in business, government, social agencies and, now, management in education, and the greatest concern for QC success centers on involving the participation of individuals to the greatest possible degree. People sometimes think that managers and bosses have their own "hidden agendas" as to outcomes. Thus, QC's can be regarded as little more than another pretense at collective decision-making and democratic procedure. "We've been through this before" is a common remark made by individuals who are being introduced to QC, and, as a result, they are less enthusiastic about becoming fully invested in the interactive process or outcome of QC efforts.

This monograph addresses a crucial element of QCs that seem to have either been taken for granted or, more likely, completely overlooked. **Efficient communication is fundamental to truly collaborative problem solving.** The measure of effective interaction is the degree to which individuals sense that their opinions and suggestions are being listened to and considered. When individuals believe that they are indeed contributing to a group effort, they tend to become spontaneously involved. Synergistic action emerges as participants contribute their thoughts, spark ideas in each other, and, in turn, are stimulated to explore new perceptions and possibilities. A collectively interacting body becomes more creative and productive than one individual alone.

Just as an efficiently operating machine requires lubricant for its system of interacting and mutually interdependent parts, so efficient communication occurs when smooth interaction is modeled, encouraged, and facilitated.

The fundamental message in this monograph is that communication can be improved when awareness is focused on the way people interact. There are basic elements of attitude and behavior that make open and honest exchange possible. In the pages that follow you will be exposed to those necessary basic elements.

FACILITATION SKILLS IN QUALITY CIRCLES

Pre-test

1. Synergy is

   a. synthetic energy
   b. synthesizing ideas
   c. collective efforts toward common goals
   d. effective interpersonal communication

2. Which one of the following statements is FALSE?

   a. Self-disclosure is revealing personal and intimate information.
   b. Accepting and agreeing are not synonymous.
   c. Openness and trust are reciprocal in interpersonal contacts.
   d. We tend to believe what we see more than what we hear.

3. The QC facilitator's most important interpersonal communication skill is that of being a good

   a. speaker
   b. story teller
   c. listener
   d. questioner

4. Which one of the following is a TRUE statement about questioning?

   a. Closed, concise questions are likely to step up the pace in a QC.
   b. Open questions should be used primarily for helping shy people to speak.
   c. Clever questioning can "trick" reluctant QC participants into contributing to the group.
   d. Questions can be an indirect expression of what a person is trying to say.

5. Using non-verbal data is most helpful to the QC facilitator as

   a. proof that a speaker is lying or telling the truth.
   b. a form of psychological sophistication.
   c. 75 means of knowing who is participating in the group and who is not.
   d. attending to the speaker's possible meta-message (unspoken message).

6. Which of the following statements is FALSE?

   a. Once skilled at non-verbal interpretation, it is easy to "figure people out."
   b. Thoughts require words. Affect can be expressed non-verbally.
   c. Non-verbal awareness can provide clues.
   d. Physical proximity of two people interacting is non-verbal data.

7. Which one of the following statements is MOST likely to be correct?

   a. When you are aware of your feelings, you become less angry.
   b. When you are aware of your body reactions, you may gain insight into your feelings.
   c. Your communication skills are more effective if you do not share your feelings.
   d. The sharing of feelings almost always involves making requests of others.

8. Which one of the following is a true "feeling statement?"

   a. "I feel like you're angry with me."
   b. "I feel like going home."
   c. "I feel jealous when I see you flirting with him."
   d. "I feel like we're in for it if another Republican administration is elected to office."

9. When a QC participant asks a question, the facilitator should

   a. ignore it as a distraction to the QC process.
   b. assess the question's value to the overall QC process.
   c. always allow it, as it is important to the questioner.
   d. assume that the facilitator should try to answer it.

10. Being a skilled listener

   a. requires training and practice.
   b. depends upon good intentions and no hearing loss.
   c. means remaining silent and passively absorbing what the speaker is saying.
   d. requires psychological training.

11. A complementary meta-message

   a. occurs when something nice is being said.
   b. is a smile that accompanies "it is nice to see you."
   c. must always be verbal.
   d. is expressed at the close of a QC session.

12. What is the distinction between hearing and listening?

a. Listening includes observing as well as hearing.
b. Listening is hearing selectively.
c. It depends upon the receiver's committment to interpersonal communication.
d. Listening concentrates on the verbal. Hearing registers only noise.

13. Presentizing and personalizing are connected with

a. talking about intimate details as they affect your present situation.
b. using the pronoun "I" as you present serious personal problems.
c. your telling someone what you think of him or her now.
d. avoiding speaking of "there-and then" issues.

14. Mind-raping is compared with

a. saying nasty things about another person's intelligence.
b. trying to verbally seduce someone.
c. telling others what they are thinking.
d. dissuading others from their position.

15. As QC facilitator your primary function is to

a. guarantee attendance at QC sessions.
b. assure that recommendations from your group will be accepted by the bosses.
c. be certain that all participants go through the QC experience with a good feeling.
d. do what you have been trained to do for helping people talk openly.

16. "Interaction catalyst" as a QC facilitator's function means the facilitator

a. referees when two participants are interacting in a hostile fashion.
b. employs techniques to stimulate interaction among group participants.
c. determines who will interact.
d. talks when there is silence among the participants.

17. Which one of the following listening statements qualifies as <u>reflective listening</u>?

Speaker: "My wife and I haven't been getting along for a long time. I am sad to think that we will probably go our separate ways."

a. "It hurts to think that the two of you might not make it."
b. "How long have you been married?"
c. "Perhaps if you saw a marriage counselor it might help."
d. "Divorce doesn't seem to carry the same stigma as it once had."

18. "Traffic-diverting" is considered to be a QC group facilitator function. This refers to

a. keeping attendance of QC group sessions.
b. telling participants where they should be and when.
c. balancing the group's membership by sex, age, etc.
d. assuring that all who wish to speak have their chance.

Key: 1-c; 2-a; 3-c; 4-d; 5-d; 6-a; 7-b; 8-c; 9-b; 10-a; 11-b; 12-a; 13-d; 14-c; 15-d; 16-b; 17a; 18-d.

FACILITATION SKILLS IN QUALITY CIRCLES

INTRODUCTION

Successful Quality Circles produce a feeling of progress and satisfaction for QC participants, particularly those who become willingly involved in and contribute to QC activities. The degree of individual satisfaction seems directly correlated with the amount and intensity of willing participation. An uninvolved QC member, one who holds back and does not willingly participate, will probably not experience feelings of progress and satisfaction.

The concept of "synergy" refers to the cumulative effect of individual contributions to the group process. It is as if each individual group member brings to the experience a store of interests, enthusiasm, excitement, concerns, etc. This store of personal variables will be referred to as "individual energy." When several individual energies are blended together in group activities and interaction, the result is called synergy. Synergy, it is believed, leads to far more creative, productive results for achieving group and individual goals than do isolated, individual efforts toward the same end. The greater the number of individuals who willingly participate and contribute to the group process, and the more generous their individual involvement, the greater the group's synergy.

How does synergy begin and develop? The purpose of this monograph is to promote a sharpened awareness of interpersonal dynamics and to describe techniques that will improve communication. Competency in these two areas will help the QC facilitator develop synergy in the group. The success of QCs depends heavily on the capabilities of the QC facilitator for creating an atmosphere of openness and trust - crucial factors in determining the success of QC or any other kind of interpersonal encounter. When I am distrustful, I will create a protective barrier that will be difficult, if not impossible, to penetrate. I will not be open or reveal my thoughts, ideas and feelings if I am distrusting. If I am confident that the other person accepts my values and ideas (accepting and agreement are not synonymous), I will tend to be open about sharing my thoughts, ideas and feelings. Openness and trust are attitudes that will speed progress in the QC.

Communications between two or more individuals seems simple. A speaker puts thoughts, feelings and perceptions in the form of words, gestures and physical proximity and then presents them to a listener who tries to understand the speakers' message. There is a natural flow of giving and receiving that usually progresses with little thought and awareness concerning the details of the communication process. Communicating effectively (defined as congruence between what was said and what was comprehended) can be improved through heightened awareness of the communication processes and through the application of techniques that sharpen the application of special techniques.

The focus of this monograph is summarized as:

> Increasing effectiveness of communication leads to increased synergy within the group, resulting in greater creativity, productiveness and satisfaction from the QC experience.

Before addressing basic facilitative skills for the QC group facilitator to master, let's examine some of the basic concepts of communication:

Outline of Communication Skills

- Perceptions and communications
- Hearing vs. listening
- Speaking clearly and concretely
- Using non-verbal information
- Avoiding involvement and responsibility
- The nature of questions

Outline for Facilitating Groups

Four functions of the group facilitator:

- Traffic director
- Model
- Interaction catalyst
- Communications facilitator

Explanation of Exercises

Exercises are organized in this format:

Name of the exercise.

- Purpose of the exercise
- Organization or structure for the group
- Instructions to the participants

- Follow up questions to try to facilitate discussion among the participants

- Additional notes

For ALL exercises presented in this monograph it is crucial that the QC facilitator try to divert discussions away from "rightness" vs. "wrongness". Discussion and exchange of thoughts, opinions and feelings is the primary value of the exercises. Even to the extent that an "answer" is equivocal or ambiguous, the ensuing discussion is what is important, and not the answer.

PERCEPTION AND COMMUNICATIONS

There are no two people who are identical in every respect. The fact that each one of us is unique is undebatable. It is an irony, however, that we generally fail to acknowledge this certainty when we are communicating with one another, particularly when communication involves a conflict of opinion or perception. There are many ways in which we can psychologically organize differences among people, e.g., extroverts vs. introverts, feminine vs. masculine, analytical vs. affective, etc. and it seems to help us when we are talking about differences. However, when we are actually confronted with differences that are interfering with effective communications it is usually because we ignore the reality of different perceptions. We approach the encounter as if our perception was the same for everyone. Therefore, when others have a different view our conclusion tends to be: they must be dumb, deceitful or delusional. In fact, when we sense that the other person is victim of the 3Ds (dumb, deceitful and delusional), it is a pretty good signal that the other person indeed has a differing view from ourselves. My version of reality and their version of reality do not match. There is not necessarily a "right" or "wrong" involved, the two versions are simply different.

> Perception differences do not equal dumb, deceitful or delusional

---

Exercise One - Young/Old Lady

1. Purpose: Perceptions are not necessarily correct or incorrect. Often they are simply different.

2. No specific breakdown into groups. Participants can talk with whomever they wish.

3. Instructions: "If you have seen the picture I am about to show you please do not involve yourself with the early part of this exercise in order not to spoil it for those who have not yet seen the picture. Later, those of you who have seen the picture will be asked to serve as resource people to those who have not seen the picture."

   Allow the group to briefly (5-10 seconds) look at the picture and then ask them:

4. Follow up: "Do you think the person in the picture is over 40 or under 40 years of age?" "Would you guess that the person in the picture is rich or poor?"

Then invite discussion as to why people have come to the conclusion they have.

After participants have had ample time to respond to the facilitator's questions about the picture, urge those who have already seen the picture to point out the details so that both perceptions can be identified.

5. Additional notes: For those who continue having difficulty in perceiving one or the other of the women, this might be helpful:

To see the old lady more clearly, cover the eye lash of the young woman (the lash is the right eye of the old woman) so that only the left eye of the old woman remains.

To see the young lady more clearly, cover the old woman's mouth (it is the necklace of the young lady) and left eye of the old lady (which is the ear of the young lady).

There are occasions when others (never ourselves!) are not really comprehending, or being completely honest or rational. However, to automatically assume that any difference of opinion or perception representsthe 3D's will obviously short circuit genuine efforts to improve interpersonal communication. My expectations of a dumb, deceitful or delusional person cannot be the same as when I am dealing with someone I perceive to be intelligent, honest and rational. Therefore, it is essential that this issue of attitudes be addressed before proceeeding to a description of communication skills that are designed to clarify differing perceptions. Sheldon Kopp writes about the "pervasive neurosis of our time" as he refers to the almost compulsive need for being "right" or "correct." It is as if there were something intolerable about being tentative and, even, flat out mistaken when we are trying to comprehend another person's world. Opinions do not have to be verified in all cases and observations do not always have to be 100% accurate for efficient communication. Unless I am willing to be tentative and adaptive in attitude, the communications skills and group leadership skills will be relatively ineffective.

> By perceiving tentatively and tolerantly, we may learn something new.

Exercise Two: 3D Discussion

1. Purpose: We sometimes argue over issues that do not have a final solution, but we diminish constructive potential by automatically rejecting opposing ideas in order to promote our own.

2. Organization: Small groups of 3 or 4.

3. Instructions: "Think of a situation in which you had a disagreement or conflict of opinion with someone. The nature and intensity of the difference may be slight or great, but it must be one that you are willing to share with your group mates.

   "Using the concept of 3D's (dumb, deceitful of delusional) what might have been the motivation for the other person's difference of opinion/perception? Was he or she indeed being stupid, dishonest or crazy (in your judgment)?"

Allow 20-30 minutes for discussion.

"Try to imagine your behavior and words on an occasion of agreement as if you could step outside yourself to objectively observe yourself. Is it possible that you may have been though of as engaging in 3D responses by

the other disagreeing party?" Their disagreement may be the earlier one already described, but they are focusing on their own behavior rather than another person's behavior.)

4. Follow up: "Does their always have to be an answer (the "right" answer) before decisions or conclusions are made? What happens to you when you think a person with whom you disagree is engaging in 3D behavior?"

5. Additional notes: Often "what if" questions are directed at the QC facilitator, e.g. "What if the other person has tricked you before?" Such questions are best redirected to the total group rather than the facilitator's attempting to answer or justify.

HEARING VS. LISTENING

"Roadblocks" to Effective Listening

Unspoken Messages: "Meta-Messages"

Attending

S-O-L-E-R

Paraphrasing

Reflecting affect

Clarifying

Summarizing

Listening for Meta-Messages

Interpersonal communications requires two or more people talking and listening to each other. In typical conversation there is usually an easy flow of giving and receiving information. As this monograph is written specifically to help QC group facilitators improve their interpersonal communications skills, it is important to stress that

LISTENING is actually more crucial to effectiveness than is asking the "right" question or clearly explaining an issue or set of instructions. All are important but listening deserves special consideration.

LISTENING is the most important communication skill

In this section we will refer to the "speaker" who normally can be thought of as a QC participant. "Listener" refers to the QC facilitator engaged in the concentrated act of receiving information from the speaker. There are other communication skills for the QC facilitator; this section however, is devoted entirely to the skill of listening.

Studs Terkel, author of American Dreams: Lost and Found described his interview technique to Newsweek (October 13, 1980):

> It is not difficult to get people to talk, even into a recorder, because most people have never encountered anyone really willing to listen to them talk about themselves. By talking, people impose a kind or order on their lives. The order may be illusory; to put a shape on things. I remember one lady who listened to her taped interview and she said, "You know what? I never knew I felt that way." When a person believes that someone is truly listening they are eager to talk. Those are exciting moments.

There is hearing and there is listening. Hearing is the capability of an organism to distinguish sounds. We can hear our favorite musical recording, a question from a student, or the flick of our BIC. Listening, on the other hand, is the conscious effort of attending to every verbal and non-verbal nuance in another person's message. Listening is the major part of interpersonal communication and it is not a passive process. The truly effective communicators go beyond words. They are absorbed in observing the speaker's posture, eye motion, voice tone and inflections. There is so much information available to the listener that is unnoticed by a hearer. Effective listening borders on artistry. Hearers rarely get the complete message.

Hearing is not the same as listening

"Roadblocks" to Effective Listening

Even when we have the sincerest intentions we can be less than effective as listeners. The difference between effective and ineffective listeners is not sincerity or desire to comprehend. The difference is in HOW listening occurs. For example, Thomas Gordon refers to "roadblocks" in interpersonal communications. "Roadblocks" are listening responses that tend to reduce the efficiency of listening and truly comprehending the speaker. When the listener genuinely desires to be involved with the speaker, there is often the strong urge to say something to the speaker in order to demonstrate interest, concern and attention. What is said and how it is expressed is the key to effective listening.

Adapting Gordon's "roadblocks" to Quality Circle settings may appear like this:

> Imagine your QC is discussing the problem of students not doing their school work. All participants are eagerly involved in the discussion and one participant states in a panic-stricken tone of voice, "I think the best way to get kids to do their work and to take pressure off the teachers is to suspend them for several days until their parents get sick of them and make them do their work." The typical, expeditious responses described below may be offered in a genuine effort to let the speaker know that he is being listened to, but in reading the responses we can see that they do little to get to the heart of the matter.
>
> (Judging, Criticizing) "That's the dumbest thing I've ever heard. Who is your hero? Hitler!"
>
> (Moralizing, Teaching) "Kids have a right to choice just as we adults do. If they choose not to do their work, they're doing exactly what we adults insist on: exercising choices."
>
> (Sending solutions) "I think behavior modification is a better solution. If the kids feel rewarded for doing their work, they will be more eager to do it."
>
> (Analyzing) "Probably the kids would hang out at the electronic game arcade and waste their time and money. At least at school they're only wasting time."
>
> (Supporting) "Now that suggestion has merit. I admire your willingness to be firm and direct with this 'no-work' problem."

Again, assuming the listener is truly interested in effective communications, we can expect that none of these responses clarify what the speaker might really mean. Perhaps the speaker's real message is closer to, "I am feeling helpless as to what to do with the kids who aren't doing their work. I feel inadequate as a teacher to those kids

because I don't know how to motivate them." It is unlikely that any of the above "roadblock" listening responses will facilitate clearer or more concrete communication. What commonly happens with the ineffective listener, especially in situations where there are differences of perceptions or values, is that the listener is forming a mental response rather than focusing all attention on what the speaker is saying. At best, when response preparation is occurring, we have pseudo-listening.

> How we listen determines effectiveness. Avoiding listening "roadblocks" requires concentration.

Exercise Three: Pseudo-Listening

1. Purpose: To provide an opportunity to experience what it is like to talk with someone who is only partially listening, or who appears to be partially listening.

2. Organization: Assemble into pairs and have them identify themselves as 'A' and 'B.'

3. Instructions: To 'A' - "Think of something you have recently experienced that you found to be exciting or stimulating: a novel, meeting a new person, trying a new recipe, going to a show, taking a trip, etc. Anything that genuinely brought you excitement and pleasure and that you are willing to share with your partner is suitable for this exercise."

   To 'B' - "While 'A' is telling you about his or her exciting experience, you are to maintain reasonable eye contact, place your body squarely in front of 'A,' periodically say "OK," "yeah," or in some fashion grunt your approval of what 'A' is saying. While you are doing this, concentrate on the details of your last weekend. Starting from Saturday morning when you got out of bed, go through each minute detail in your recollection and create a mental replay as to exactly how you used your time last weekend, and in what sequence of events. You will not have to share your recollections, but conscientiously try to reconstruct the event of last weekend while 'A' is talking. And don't forget to maintain reasonable eye contact and grunt occasionally."

   Allow approximately four minutes for 'A' to talk and 'B' to mentally reconstruct their weekend.

Upon completing the 4 minutes of "conversation," allow another 4 minutes for 'A' and 'B' to discuss the exercise and what they might have learned from it.

After 'A' and 'B' have had their chance to talk about the experience, open the discussion to the entire group. "Was 'B' successful in appearing to be interested while doing his or her own task?" "What were some observable clues that 'B' was not with 'A?' "Is anyone willing to share his or her perspective on this experience?"

"To continue this exercise we are going to switch and allow 'B' to talk about something stimulating or exciting that they have experienced. This time however, 'A' will actually be listening to 'B,' but in a manner that might appear to be pseudo-listening."

To 'B' - "You have the same task as 'A' had before. Try to present your experience in such a way as to capture 'A's' interest."

To 'A' - "Ask questions, make comments that show that you are listening and are interested in what 'B' is saying, BUT sit with your body at an angle, do not maintain eye contact - look out the window, at your finger nails, doodle, do whatever is necessary to make yourself behaviorally appear disinterested while you try actually to listen to 'B'."

Allow approximately 4 minutes for 'B' to talk and 'A' to listen while trying to appear disinterested. Then open the discussion to the entire group. "Was 'A' successful in his or her task?" "What effect did 'A's' style of listening have on 'B'?" "What was it like for you, 'A'? If you were really interested in what your partner was saying, there may have been some difficulty for you to do what was requested of you."

4. Follow up: Having just completed the exercise on pseudo-listening, it may be timely to begin discussion on S-O-L-E-R and the kind of non-verbal characteristics that we notice in "good" and "bad" listeners.

5. Additional notes: Without pushing the participants too hard, you may caution them (if you think the group needs it) at the beginning to try not to giggle or act silly in the exercise. Not fully entering into the task deprives your partner of a learning experience.

Lack of awareness and formal training are the primary reasons that poor listening habits endure. Poor listeners either do not know what effective listening is, or they do not know how to employ the skill of effective listening, or, in some cases, they do not care enough to want to invest the necessary effort and alertness to be effective listeners. Being a skilled listener does not come easily or quickly. It is not just a matter of hearing well and of good intentions.

How might the scenario have been changed had the QC facilitator responded with something like: "You sound desperate about finding ways to help some of your problem students." Although the speaker did not use the word "desperate," the sensitive facilitator-listener was attempting to focus full attention on what the speaker was saying, rather that mentally preparing a reply. If, indeed, the speaker was feeling desperate and the listener was accurate, we could predict a continuing dialogue in which the speaker feels affirmed. What if the listener is inaccurate? What if the speaker's feelings were not those of desperation but of bitterness of inadequacy? Maybe the speaker was simply being flippant? The listener's effort to focus attention is usually sufficiently encouraging for a speaker to clarify the misperception and continue the dialogue. In either case, whether the listener's response is accurate or not, the listener's caring attitude and behavior can increase the probability of the speaker's feeling encouraged to continue.

This increased awareness and effort to be more effective as a listener is sometimes referred to as active listening or reflective listening. In essence the active or reflective approach to listening is like being a mirror for speakers, allowing them to "see" (hear) what they are saying for the purpose of sharpening the clarity of their statements. In its simplest and most awkward form it is like a human tape recorder, where the listener repeats everything the speaker says. Such parrot-like responses are minimally helpful and risk generating annoyance from the speaker. The effective listening responses promoted here are not just reflecting back words, but also listening at a deeper, more concentrated level than that which occurs in ordinary conversation.

> Reflective listening is more than repeating a speaker's word verbatim.

Unspoken Messages: "Meta"-Messages

One of the qualities of an effective listener is the ability to sense the messages that a speaker may harbor that are consciously or unconsciously left unspoken. There could be a number of reasons why a speaker is less than clear with a message. Most innocently, a speaker may not be entirely aware of what he or she wishes to say or perhaps lacks the necessary skills for stating a clear message. Another speaker may choose to conceal or distort a message because of a "hidden agenda", i.e., an insidious attempt to control or manipulate the communication for personal

gain. A descriptive label for this kind of double message is "meta-message". Meta-messages are messages about messages. A parent, for example, who says to her child, "I want you to do your chores NOW!" is expressing more than her desire for chores to be done. She wants immediate compliance. That is a meta-message. A common form of meta-messages is the non-verbal signal that accompanies verbal expression. A smile accompanying "I like you" is a complementary meta-message. "I'm NOT angry!" accompanied with a frown is a confusing meta-message. The use of non-verbal information will be discussed later. For now, merely be alerted that effective communication extends well beyond the obvious spoken word. The sensitive listener is tuning into meta-messages in an attempt to truly comprehend and openly clarify what the speaker really means.

> Skilled listening attempts to "hear" what is not being expressed.

The ultimate goal of the truly effective listener is summed up in Carl Roger's description of empathic understanding. The effective listener:

1) refrains from judging and evaluating what the other person says.

2) seeks to understand by assuming the other's point of view.

3) looks for the personal meaning that the message has for the speaker.

Next, let's examine the basic listening skills:

Attending

Paraphrasing

Reflecting affect

Clarifying

Summarizing

Listening for meta-messages

Attending

Think back to the exercise on pseudo-listening. In normal, daily conversation how many times have you talked with someone who looks directly at you, says "um-hum" at seemingly appropriate moments, and yet, something appears to be missing. Since formal training is available to

comparatively few, talking to non-listeners is a common experience. In day-to-day conversation listeners often "go through the motions" because they are preoccupied with other concerns, distractions, or are simply not interested in what is being said but hope not to appear rude. Unfortunately, there are some listeners who engage in inefficient listening patterns because they do not know there are listening skills that can be used.

The first basic step of reflective listening is to consciously apply the awareness and effort that go with attending. Simply looking at a speaker does not ensure an attending listener and attending is important in two respects. First, the listener is actively pursuing the necessary parts of reflective listening. Concentrated effort is involved. Second, the speaker will surely be more responsive and eager to talk when convinced that his listener genuinely cares about what is being said.

S-O-L-E-R

Gerard Egan has coined the acronym S-O-L-E-R for summing up the elements that are considered attending behavior. S (face the other person squarely to show that you are being "available" to the speaker), O (adapt an open posture, a sign that you are open to what the other person has to say), L (lean toward the other, as a natural sign of involvement), E (maintain good eye contact, to let the speaker know of your deep involvement), R (be relatively relaxed in this position, even though there is a kind of tension about it; intensity of interaction eventually will come naturally).

There is a possibility that Egan's S-O-L-E-R focus may seem a bit calculated and perhaps "phony". However, as reflective listening requires concentrated awareness and is the most crucial of the QC facilitator's communication skills, all aspects of awareness should be addressed.

> An attending listener is a concentrating listener.

Paraphrasing

In normal conversations we hear a lot of "um-hum", "I see", etc., as indicators of listening. Paraphrasing is a listening technique that requires more attention and effort than "um-hum" and cannot be employed by listeners who are distracted and inattentive. Although we acknowledge once again that calculated employment of communication skills may seem phony at first, practice can quickly dispel awkwardness. Once a naturalness develops, the listener will discover that paraphrasing becomes a method for concentrating on the speaker's message to a greater degree that we are normally accustomed to in casual conversation.

Paraphrasing is succinctly rephrasing (not parroting) the content of what the speaker said.

Example:

Speaker:

"When class size exceeds 25 students, it is difficult to provide adequate personal attention."

Parroting response to speaker:

"More that 25 students prevents you from giving them adequate attention."

Paraphrasing response to the speaker:

"Quality instruction declines as your class gets larger."

Although the rising inflection at the end of the paraphrase would form a question, a paraphrase is better formed as a reflection statement rather than as a question. The intent is to succinctly feed back what the listener has heard. Also, a speaker would probably utter more than one sentence before a listener would paraphrase. In a QC setting (as contrasted with conversation) the speaker would be doing the bulk of the talking with the facilitator-listener paraphrasing only to the extent necessary for helping the speaker continue. Paraphrases do not have to be frequent to be effective.

Compare the paraphrase example with the "roadblock" listening responses presented earlier. Without concentrated effort the easiest thing to do would be to ask questions, offer advice, be consoling, etc. None of the "roadblock" listening responses would be convincing that the listener was truly attempting to understand the speaker's concern. Even parroting is more convincing than "roadblock" responses, but parroting can be perceived as shallow and aversive. Likewise, repetitive listening responses like "I hear you saying..." can become irritating with a high risk of appearing manipulative. Paraphrasing is like trying to mirror the inner thoughts and experiences of the speaker as best the listener can, and then expressing them in the listener's words as succinctly and directly as possible. Even the precision and accuracy of the listener's reflection is not as important to the communication process as is the speaker's perception that the listener is trying to comprehend what is being said. If the listener is "off" and the speaker believes that the listener is sincere, the speaker will correct the listener and be motivated to continue.

Paraphrasing requires more listening concentration than parroting.

Exercise Four: Paraphrasing

1. Purpose: To identify paraphrased listening responses from less helpful listening responses.

2. Organization: After the participants have completed the paper-pencil task, they should gather in small groups of 3 or 4 to compare their answer choices and discuss their reasoning for choosing as they did.

3. Instructions: "Circle the following responses that are already in paraphrase form. Rewrite those that are not, making them into paraphrase responses. When you have finished doing this task independently, gather together with 2 or 3 others who have completed the task, compare your selections of paraphrased responses and share your rewritten versions."

Speaker (*)

*I'm not earning enough to live a lifestyle I'd prefer. I enjoy too many interesting activities that I don't want to give up, but they are so expensive. I like photography, skiing, flying, gourmet cooking and refinishing antique automobiles.

Responses:

a. It seems that the good life is pretty expensive.
b. Just renting skis costs an arm and a leg.
c. What do you do for a living?
d. Since all of your interests are fun, it's difficult to decide where to spend your money.
e. I like photography but your other interests have never appealed to me.

---

*I can't decide whether or not to apply for admission to the M.A. program. It would be expensive and I've been out of school for five years. I just have a sense that I am lacking training and I need to begin to specialize. I might as well have a graduate degree to verify my education and training.

Responses:

a. There seem to be as many "good" reasons as "bad" reasons to support your decision.
b. Ambivalence can be frustrating when you're making an important decision.
c. It would be a good feeling to know exactly which decision is right for you.
d. Why don't you make a list of all the good points and all the bad

points and see which list is longer.

e. The expense of your degree won't be balanced by the increase in your salary. Can you afford it?

---

*I keep getting the feeling that my boss is angry with me. It seems like lately he hasn't been joking around as much and he hasn't said anything at all about my work for about three weeks now. I wonder what I should do?

Responses:

a. Maybe your boss has problems outside of work.
b. You worry too much.
c. Why don't you come right out and ask him if he is happy or dissatisfied with your work? There's nothing like tackling a problem straight on.
d. You've noticed a change in your relationship with Mr._____.
e. Not knowing where you stand with someone who is important to you is unnerving.

---

4. Follow up: Before the small groups begin their discussion it may be wise to remind them that paraphrasing focuses on said, reflecting it back to the speaker, and hoping that you (listener) have captured the essence of what the speaker means. Any other kind of listening response is not paraphrasing. Sometimes there is quibbling about the "right" answers. Refer the group back to the information in the monograph to have them refresh their memories about the description of what paraphrasing is. Try to resist the urge to tell the group what the "right" answer is. They will probably learn more from the discussion than from having answers verified.

"Answers": 1st set, a & b; 2nd set, a, b & c; 3rd set, d & e.

Reflecting affect

Feelings are a difficult phenomenon to comprehend with satisfaction. Everyone experiences feelings. They are so universal, yet so complex and diverse, and they are enormously pervasive and persuasive in our daily

decision making. Feelings are subjective acknowledgments that we are reacting to something or someone. They provide an internal signal that our values and belief system are being challenged or supported.

At times everyone is troubled or joyous to varying degrees. What triggers depression and elation is infinitely complex in its origin and expression. In those rare moments when we are capable of sitting back to objectively scrutinize the issue of feelings, we can recognize immense significance. However, when we are emotionally embroiled in decision-making, feelings are bewildering because they become both the cause and justification for our decisions and behavior. The tendency, then, is to ignore, distort, and distrust feelings. When we struggle to acknowledge the enormous complexity and importance of <u>affect</u> in our thinking, decision-making and behavior, we can begin to appreciate how difficult it is to express feelings objectively, clearly, productively, and satisfyingly.

We usually approach the issue of feelings with value judgments. Feeling good is "good"; feeling bad is "bad." The important contribution of using communication skills is helping people express their feelings without <u>valuing</u> or passing judgment on the speaker's feelings. Feelings are a reality, whatever their nature, and effective listeners will help speakers express themselves clearly so that they can assess the significance of their feelings. Expressing a feeling, regardless of its intensity or nature - euphoria or despair - is a signal that something significant is occurring in the person's life. To ignore or suppress feelings, as many are inclined to do, can be debilitating. It is like ignoring or suppressing reality!

> Everyone has feelings of some kind - to some degree.

If we are talking about the possibility of ignoring or suppressing feelings as reality, we are getting into rather serious psychic territory. Not only are there <u>values</u> about feelings; there are <u>feelings</u> about feelings. When someone smiles at me, it is likely that I will feel good about it. If someone is yelling at me in anger, I will probably respond defensively in some fashion. I will certainly be paying attention to the attacker. It isn't so much that the feelings are actually ignored as it is that feelings are not attended to honestly, our own or others' feelings. The reason for this is that feelings, our own or others, can be overwhelming at times. Effective listening may be disrupted by the listener's preoccupation with his or her own feelings that were perhaps triggered by the speaker's disclosure of feelings. At times, the listener's involvement may be diverted because of boredom! In any case, ignoring or suppressing feelings can only diminish the listener's effectiveness. Feelings are used most constructively when they are brought to the surface and discussed. If it is the speaker's

feelings, a constructive result can occur through the listener's reflection. If it is the listener's feelings, this is accomplished by self-disclosure (discussed later in this monograph). Feelings are so profoundly important that we often do not know what to do about them. We stuff them inside and do nothing.

When we speak of the importance of feelings, we are considering both the expressions of the speaker and the listener's reactions to the speaker. Ignoring either is absolutely detracting from effective interpersonal contact. Sometimes feelings can be scary. We, as listeners, may begin to feel responsible for the speaker's feelings. We may feel guilty about not being able to instantly relieve the speaker's pain or circumstances. It is understandable that avoidance is the first reflex when feelings emerge. However, attempts to communicate without attention to existing affect is destined to be ineffective.

> Suppressing or ignoring feelings detracts from open, honest communications.

Feelings as meta-messages are common. That is, a person who is denying or suppressing feelings may unconsciously reveal them in the form of non-verbal cues. A clenched fist, even without words, sends a reasonably clear meta-message. People who complain of feeling bad reveal more about the depth of their hurt through the drooping shoulders and teary eyes than they do through their words. Being a sensitive listener, requires a sensitivity to another's feelings and is the ultimate in demonstrating care and genuine concern.

The following statement is made by an individual who sharply strikes her desk top with clenched fist and speaks through gritted teeth: "Our building administrator announced that he is installing a time clock for verifying our arriving and departing times. That's the most unprofessional thing I have ever heard of."

Imagine these typical "roadblock" listening responses offered in reaction to the speaker's statement:

- "When is he going to do that?"
- "If he were my administrator, I'd tell him to 'shove it' and if that didn't work, I'd go over his head."
- "There are ways of getting around time clocks. You can punch each other in and out when you want your card to look OK."

Contrast these typical "roadblock" responses (the speaker was heard but not fully listened to) with the following reflections of affect. The three reflections are intended to represent different levels of reflection.

- "You look and sound as though your administrator has really made you angry."
- "Being treated so unprofessionally is really upsetting you."
- "You feel demeaned when you're not respected as a trustworthy person."

There is no attempt to make precise distinctions between the three reflections. However, the first response is reflecting the obvious while the third response illustrates a more intense level of listening. The speaker did not use the words "demean" or "trustworthy", but that was the meta-message that the listener picked up. Being able to understand and clarify the speaker's feelings requires a commitment to practicing, experiencing, experimenting and trusting one's intuition. The technique of reflecting affect calls for it.

> Understanding and clarifying a speaker's feelings requires commitment and concentration.

A sensitive listener becomes aware of feelings a speaker may have and reflects them back along with a succinct paraphrase of the message's content. Skill with reflecting affect requires concentration and practice because feelings are often overlooked by the listener and the speaker. Clear expression of feelings is not common in our lives. Even when we are aware of possible feelings, there seems to be a limiting range of vocabulary, mostly adjectives, that we rely on, and often they do not accurately describe the experience.

It is a creative communication facilitator-listener who can reflect feelings as metaphors and/or visceral reports as well as using descriptive adjectives. For example, in responding to the statement concerning the time clock, the listener might have replied, "He's making you feel like a prisoner" (a metaphorical description of feeling). Or, another possibility might be, "Unreasonable regulations make your stomach knot up" (a visceral description of feeling). Will Schutz reports that people who are fully experiencing their feelings become aware of physiological changes that occur during affective reactions. For example, some people who feel loving and caring literally experience warm sensations in their thorax area. That is probably why we speak of having a "warm heart" when we feel an attraction or liking for someone or something.

Feelings are easily expressed as adjectives, e.g. "happy," but also can be expressed as metaphors or body sensations.

Exercise Five: Affect

1. Purpose: To identify direct expressions of feelings.

2. Organization: This paper-pencil exercise is completed independently and then they assemble in groups of 3 or 4 to compare answers and discuss their choices.

3. Instructions: "Place an 'x' by those statements that qualify as direct expressions of feelings. When you have completed the task independently, get together with 2 or 3 others who have completed the exercise and compare and discuss your selections."

   a. I feel that the 49ers will make it to the Super Bowl again.

   b. I hate artichokes!

   c. When you praise me, I feel ten feet tall.

   d. You son of a bitch!

   e. You are a disappointment.

   f. What a lovely day!

   g. I feel that this is an easy test.

   h. I'm afraid to ask for help.

   i. Why can't you ever be anywhere on time?

   j. I have a lump in my throat as I listen to you.

   k. I feel satisfied after that meal.

   l. I feel the banquet food was surprisingly good.

4. Follow Up: After the small group have had their chance to discuss their choices, they may appreciate the reasoning behind the "correct" answer. It is important that the

facilitator not get caught in the trap of defending or justifying "correct" answers. Since the discussion is primary, disputers should be encouraged to look for the information in the monograph.

"Correct" answers: c - h - j - k

a. The person may feel good about the 49ers but no affect is expressed here.

b. A person who actually has feelings about artichokes is a little weird. Having an upset stomach from eating artichokes is a physical feeling but not an emotion.

c. Metaphorical description of feeling.

d. Name calling - feeling is certainly there, but it isn't expressed directly and clearly.

e. Speakers may have feelings about the other person, but the speaker hasn't said that disappointment was his or her feeling.

f. A joyous statement - but speaker hasn't been directly what his or her feelings are.

g. Speaker thinks this is an easy test. He or she may like (feeling) easy tests, but that isn't what is stated here.

h. "Afraid" is definitely a feeling. Sometimes, however, people use "afraid" when they really mean, "I don't want to..."

i. A question that implies a feeling, but no feelings are expressed here.

j. Visceral description of feeling.

k. "Satisfied," if it means contentment, is a feeling.

l. The food was good, but food doesn't have feelings. People do.

5. Additional notes: Commonly there are participants who become frustrated at not being told the "right" answer or having their answer confirmed. If there are enough vocal participants who are expressing their frustration at not being reaffirmed for "right" answers, it may be a good idea to discuss the concept of being "perfect" or "right". Since the communication skills described in this monograph emphasize the need for tentativeness, this situation may be suitable for stimulating a lively discussion on the distinction between right/perfection and tentativeness.

Clarifying

When we hear people say they are going to "clarify things," it usually menas they are going to "set the record straight," as if the clarifier had the "right" answer or interpretation. In this monograph the term clarifying refers to the listener's concentration on the speaker's perceptions and involves both reflective listening and questions (which will be discussed later). Clarifying is intended to make vague statements more concrete, to check potential meta-messages, and generally improve the efficiency of communication. Clarifying is presented tentatively and in no way is it intended to establish the truth of the listener's perceptions. The focus of clarifying remains entirely on the speaker.

For example, imagine two QC participants, one a teacher, the other his supervisor, discussing the possible adoption of a new program. The supervisor says, "The Superintendent will not allow any new programs until the budget is passed - and that's final!" If the facilitator has succeeded in influencing a QC environment of trust and openness, it should be a constructive move to check out several possible impressions. Is the supervisor angry with the teacher, someone else, or something else? Perhaps the supervisor feels insecure, does not completely understand the new program, or is afraid of the Superintendent. And is it possible that the supervisor simple does not like the new program? Clarifying the supervisor's inner thoughts could perhaps bring the supervisor and the teacher closer together and at least could avoid leaving frustration over the exchange.

Here are some examples of clarifying responses:

Speaker: "The district office continues to increase its bureaucracy, which means more paper demands on us. I think I am going to begin to look for a change of scenery."

"Roadblock" listening responses:

- "I just ignore most of it. I only do the reports that are directly relevant to my work."
- "Look, kid, it's part of the job. The district office wouldn't be asking for anything that they don't actually need."
- "You couldn't afford to quit. Where else would you get a job?"
- "The paper work will increase regardless of the district's increasing staff."

Listener's clarifying efforts:

- "Your phrase 'change of scenery' sounds as though you might consider resigning."
- "What paper demands are you referring to?"
- "I am not sure what 'change of scenery' means to you.
- "You sound disgusted but I'm not sure exactly why."
- "I'm not making a connection between 'increased bureaucracy,' 'paper demands,' and 'change of scenery.' Would you go through that again?

In the illustration of clarifying, the listener is attempting to get a clearer picture of the speaker's message. This is a different purpose from paraphrasing, where the listener has a sense of sufficient clarity to reflect what the speaker means. Clarifying is used when the facilitator-listener is unsure of the speaker's meaning.

Clarifying focuses on the speaker's meaning.

Summarizing

A summary can be thought of as a lengthier, more detailed paraphrase. Paraphrases, however, are designed to encourage the speaker(s) to continue, while summarizing is usually employed to either redirect the speaker(s) or to bring an end to the conversation or session.

There may be times when a particular theme seems to reappear or be repeated enough to make the QC facilitator think that the dialogue or session is "stuck," not progressing. That would be the right time to employ summarization.

Imagine that in a QC one participant has complained about the graffitti that exists on the school walls, another has expressed anger about vandalism, still a third participant speaks in disgust about kids' increasing use of foul language, and a fourth describes the fighting that goes on daily at her school. The facilitator has a hunch that the session is turning into a "can-you-top-this" gripe session and therefore summarizes for the purpose of redirecting the group.

Facilitator: "Several of you have expressed concern about your school's negative environment in the form of graffiti, vandalism, foul language and fighting. In order to get a clearer picture of your total school environment, let's look at the issue from another perspective. What are some of the positive things that exist in your school?"

If the facilitator's intention is to bring the session to a close, a summary might be:

Facilitator: "We've explored the issue of negative attitudes as we talked about graffiti, vandalism, foul language and fighting. Before our next session you might begin thinking about the other side of this issue. What are some things that you would <u>not</u> want changed at your school? What are some of the positive things that come to mind?"

This monograph includes techniques and procedures for facilitating the group's interaction. Summarization is an important technique for the QC facilitator to master, and as a group facilitation technique it will be addressed again later. At this point, however, the focus of summary is on communication skills.

Summary, like paraphrasing, should be succinct. Although it is not a verbatim regurgitation of everything said, it does call for more detail and information than a paraphrase. Paraphrasing is used to help keep the speaker talking, while summary is intended to influence a change in the dialogue. Usine the analogy of driving a car, we can see that

paraphrasing is like using the accelerator, which is applied periodically but regularly to motivate. Summary is like using the shift and brake.

Using them requires a noticeable change so that in addition to the accelerator you must shift as you make a sharp turn and carefully apply pressure to the brake for slowing down and for making easy, gentle stops.

> Summarizing is similar to paraphrasing, but for different purpose.

Listening for meta-messages

As mentioned earlier, meta-messages are messages about messages. Another way of thinking about the concept of meta-messages is to think of the message that is not being expressed directly and openly. A lack of directness and openness may be intentional or unintentional. In other words, a speaker may be intending to withhold information. Often, however, it may be that the speaker simply needs assistance in saying what is meant.

Non-verbal behavior is a frequent information source for clues as to what the meta-message is. More likely, there are hosts of verbal and non-verbal data that spark a hunch as to the unspoken message. Listening to the voice tone as certain words are emphasized or glossed over is an important source of data for generating hunches about meta-messages. Try this brief exercise:

> Say to yourself: "I hit him in the eye." Say it six times, each time emphasizing a different word. Emphasizing certain words changes the meaning of what is being said although the words do not change.

The trick to being a successful listener of meta-messages, assuming that you really want to communicate with the speaker, is to trust your intuition and share it with the speaker. The speaker is the key person in the communication exchange, since only he or she knows what really is important about the communication. The purpose of sharing the listener's hunch as to the meta-message is to demonstrate the intensity of the listener's involvement, not to prove anything. "THIS is what you really mean..." is obviously an inappropriate way of dealing with a speaker's meta-message. As in paraphrasing, the importance of accuracy is usually outweighed by the sincerity of a listener who is trying to listen and comprehend. The point is to trust intuition and share it as a more sensitive and, it is hoped, insightful, paraphrase.

Exercise Six: Ego/Shadow

1. Purpose: This exercise will provide an opportunity to trust one's intuition.

2. Organization: Assemble in groups of 3 and identify selves as "A" - "B" - "C."

3. Instructions: "You will rotate in this exercise so that each one of you will complete the three assignments as described."

Speaker ("A") "Talk about anything that you choose, directing the dialogue to your listener ('B', in this case). The ego/shadow ('C', in this case) will occasionally touch you lightly on the shoulder to indicate that he or she wishes to interject something. You should not turn around to look at ego/shadow; rather, pause briefly at the interruption and then continue talking to your listener. It is your choice to acknowledge what ego/shadow has said; however, you do not have to. Whatever the case, do not turn around to look at ego/shadow."

Listener ("B") "You function as an inviting listener to the speaker ('A', in this case). Ask questions, nod approvingly, paraphrase, maintain good eye contact, sit squarely facing the speaker, and do all of the things that you think are necessary to be a convincing listener. Ignore the ego/shadow's ('C', in this case) remarks unless the speaker picks up on the remarks as if they were his or her own."

Ego/Shadow ("C") "Position yourself out of the line of vision of the speaker ('A', in this case), but close enough to hear and to be able to comfortably touch the speaker's shoulder. As ego/shadow you listen intently to what the speaker is saying, listening for meta-message. What is the speaker not saying aloud? When you sense a meta-message, you are to place your hand lightly on the speaker's shoulder to signal that you want the speaker to pause briefly. You then express what you think the meta-message is as if you were the speaker, e.g.,

...and I did not like what he said.
...because I am afraid to hurt her feelings.
...and I felt absolutely wonderful.
...although the cop didn't seem too concerned.
...since I am reluctant to tell you all the details.

Do not be concerned with accuracy. The point of the exercise is to experiment with trusting your intuition. How well you performed as ego/shadow will

be assessed later in the exercise. You will be able to receive feedback, however, unless you are willing to risk stating your intuition about the speaker's unspoken statements."

Each speaker is allowed 5 to 8 minutes in which to talk. Allow another 4 to 5 minutes for the trio to discuss their experience.

4. Follow Up: Be sure that ego/shadow is not able to observe the speaker's face or the front of the body. The purpose for this is to limit the non-verbal cues available to the ego/shadow.

It is generally a good idea to allow time for large group discussion to share common experiences after each round in the exercise. This seems to help prime the next go-around when "B" becomes ego/shadow, "C" becomes speaker and "A" becomes listener.

5. Additional notes: This exercise <u>can</u> be a powerful experience if it is done conscientiously. The ego/shadow often do not realize how "good" they are capable of being. Without benefit of non-verbal information that normally augments a message, subtleties of meaning can be picked up from voice inflections alone if one's intuition is trusted. Sometimes speakers become aware of issues, opinions and subtleties that had escaped them until the ego/shadow picked up a meta-message.

In your QC a participant's eyes are beaming and his smile is the biggest and most genuine you have noticed since you've been meeting, as he says, "I kind of like that idea." The QC facilitator responds, "Your face seems to be saying that you're EXCITED about the idea." the words of the speaker were not as strong as his actual feelings. The QC facilitator surmised that "excited" was closer to the speaker's real feelings. The facilitator does not offer "excited" as a form of correction. Rather, it is his or her effort to help make the communication process more efficient.

A participant states, "Administrators are trying to cover their asses. They're only out to protect themselves. They're not going to listen to our suggestions." The QC facilitator, realizing that the participant is speaking of her own administrator, shares her intuition. "You are saying 'administrators,' Claudia. I have a hunch that you are thinking of someone specifically." What Claudia does about the facilitator's hunch is entirely up to Claudia. The facilitator is not trying to tell her what she is thinking. However, if Claudia perceives that she is part of

an open and trusting QC, and is willing to be more concrete, the QC facilitator has provided the invitation to continue by noting a possible meta-message.

> Paula describes her idea for improving "rainy day" procedures and another QC participant asks, "Do you think that is really feasible?" The QC facilitator picks up the doubt in the question and suspects the meta-message is "I don't think that will work." So, the facilitator responds, "Your question suggests reservations, Barbara. What parts of Paula's idea concern you the most?"

Meta-messages occur constantly, with or without intention. The purpose of employing communication skills is to clarify unspoken and unclear messages. It should be apparent to the reader that the more open and straightforward the messages between individuals, the more efficient the communication process should be, thus, the more successful the QC experience.

Meta-messages (unspoken) exist consciously or unconsciously.

SPEAKING CLEARLY AND CONCRETELY

There can be a disappointing let down, a thud-like feeling, when you have tried to communicate something important to another person who has not understood or responded. During periods of poor communication the speaker may think, "They're not listening!" or "They don't understand!" Remember the 3D's described earlier? Chances that the listener will understand improve when the speaker's message is clear, concrete, direct and authentic. We have examined ways of responding to the speaker when you are the listener. Now we will examine techniques for increasing the probability that you, as speaker, will be more clearly understood.

Sending messages in a clear, concrete manner requires conscious effort. First, you must not assume that your listener will automatically comprehend, filling in the missing information, and accurately inferring all that you really mean.

Although the following newspaper headline is in written rather than verbal form, it illustrates an ambiguous message.

> "U.N. to Issue Flags of the World Series." (Tri-State Trader, November 25, 1978, p. 4.)

The meaning of this sentence depends upon how you punctuate or break up the words. Is the U.N. going to issue postage stamps to honor "flags of the World Series" (presumably, baseball team flags) or will the U.N. issue a series of "flags of the world?"

Listening to self: So, the first consideration is to listen to yourself as you speak, hoping to catch ambiguities and clarify them as quickly as possible.

> Boss: "This report must be completed soon."

Does "completed" mean when the writing is done, when the typist is finished with it, or when the report reaches its final destination? Does "soon" mean this afternoon, by the end of the week, or before the year's end?

Minimize meta-messages: A second consideration for clarity and concreteness is that of minimizing meta-messages. Your awareness of others' potential meta-messages when you are a listener should make you more alert to the existence of your own. Once again, do not assume that because you know what you mean that the other person should accurately infer what you know. An example of an inefficient, indirect opening message is a child saying to his parent, "You know that antique music box that you told me not to play with? Well, it broke." You probably picked up the child's meta-message immediately. Adults employ similar vague and inefficient messages. Picture a boss requesting a report from his secretary:

> Boss: "Where is that report we completed yesterday (there were several reports completed yesterday). I need to check it once more."

The secretary could not know which completed report her boss is referring to. Once she knows and locates the report, how is she to interpret "needing it?" He wants to "check it." Does that suggest that there might be something wrong with it and will have to be retyped? There are several meta-messages possible in the boss' request. A more concrete statement would be more efficient.

> Boss: "Would you locate the Burns report that was completed yesterday afternoon. I would like to review the financial section before we mail it this afternoon."

Distinguishing between observation and inference: As we consider the desirability of reducing others' need to infer your meaning as speaker, we come to an important awareness of distinguishing between observation and inference. "You look tired" is an inference that is unaccompanied by data. "I see you yawning and that makes me think that you might be tired." Do not present interpretations and inferences as if they were fact. Present them tentatively and include the data upon which they are based so that the other person can adjust, correct, or amplify. By

including the data that is associated with your inference or interpretation, the liklihood of your sending meta-messages that are inaccurately interpretated are minimized.

> As you speak, practice listening to yourself so you can catch vague interpretations and ambiguous messages.

Exercise Seven: Observation - Inference

1. Purpose: This exercise is designed to help the participant distinguish data (fact that is established by observing, hearing, touching, smelling) from interpretation (inference). Concrete messages do not present interpretation without the data that lead to it.

2. Organization: This paper-pencil exercise is completed independently and then they assemble in groups of 3 or 4 to compare their responses and discuss their reasoning.

3. Instructions: "Before proceeding with this task, please read the introductory statement to be clear on what your instructions are."

Introductory Statement:

Commonly we present interpretations to others as if they were facts. "You look tired" is an inference.

Inference

"You look tired."

What data lead to the inference?

Observation

I see a person yawning and stretching.

Let's try another observation - inference, starting with the observation.

I haven't seen my neighbors for two weeks.

My neighbors are on vacation.

"Do you (participants) have questions about the distinction between observation (data) and inference (interpretation)? If not, complete the paper-pencil part of this exercise on your own. When you have completed it, get together with 2 or 3 other people who have completed the task and discuss and compare your responses."

The statements below are either observation (left column) or inference (right column). Where there is an observation, you furnish an inference. Where there is an inference, you furnish the kind of data that might lead to the inference. Don't be concerned about "right" answers; the point of the exercise is simply to help you distinguish between data and interpretation.

Observation	Inference
1. I see my dog scratching.	
	2. Today must be a federal holiday.
3. My utility bill is 30% higher this month compared with last month's.	
	4. My friend was out late last night.
	5. My lover/spouse is in an amorous mood.
6. I see the hood of a car raised and someone has his head under the hood.	
7. My child received 1 C, 2 D's, and an F on her grade report.	
	8. My companion enjoys Mexican food.
9. I see people around me looking up into the sky.	
10. I've been waiting 40 min. for a subway that runs on a 15 min. schedule.	
	11. You don't love me any more.
	12. It is going to rain.

Clear expression of feelings: A major area of communication difficulty is expressing feelings. Without an awareness of communication skills, feelings are usually either distorted when they are expressed or, more commonly, they are suppressed, denied or ignored. None of these styles of dealing with affect is in the healthiest interest of the speaker. There are constructive means of sending messages that transmit a speaker's authentic (real) feelings.

When people suppress, deny or ignore their feelings, they are not controlling them as is their desire; they are allowing the feelings to be in control. The feelings being suppressed, denied or ignored are actually influencing the thoughts and behavior of the person attempting to control the feelings. Speakers may invest enormous amounts of energy in concealing their true feeling state, and in so doing become inauthentic. that is, they consciously behave in a manner that does not match their internal state. If prolonged, there is increasing risk of gross distortions, particularly with negative feelings. Also, there is mounting evidence that distorted and unexpressed negative feelings can result in inordinate stress and even in psychosomatic disorders. The healthiest way to control over one's (feeling) self is to express the feelings as they occur in the here-and-now.

It is better to air the feelings as quickly as possible, although it is not being proposed that you blurt out every random thought and feeling whenever they occur. Such abandonment of choice and good judgment would be foolish. If you are surrounded by a group of surly motorcyclists in black leather jackets, it may be prudent to withhold your feelings of the moment. Or, if you are being introduced to a highly attractive individual who has strong sex appeal for you, you may choose to temper somewhat your expressions of affect. Here-and-now expressions of feelings are, on the other hand, quite appropriate for QC interaction because they foster the attitude of openness and trust, thus increasing the probability of clear and authentic interaction. How those feelings are expressed is the focus of this discussion.

Typically, people express their feelings by projecting them in the form of labels, e.g., "You're a doll!" (instead of "I am attracted to you"), and in the form of indirect reports, e.g., "You're a pleasant person" (instead of "I enjoy being with you"). In normal dialogue the speaker probably would have thought these to be clear statements, and, indeed, the messages may have been understood. The point here is that feelings can be expressed in such a manner that the speaker is not being consciously aware of relinguishing responsibility for their statements. A self-responsible statement places feelings where they are most real, i.e., within the speaker. Labeling someone "You're crazy!" is not as self-responsible as openly stating the disbelieving feeling, i.e., "I am confused and upset by what you just said." "You argue too much!" is an indirect report of "I don't like it when you challenge my ideas," and it should be apparent which of the two expressions is the more self-responsible. It is important for you, as a QC facilitator to encourage all participants to be fully responsible for what they say and do in the group (facilitator included). In the facilitator's efforts to foster self-responsible dialogue, the most important technique is to model the

type of communication behavior that will be most beneficial to the individuals and the QC progress.

> Speaker's expressing their feelings in an open, honest and direct manner send clear messages.

Assertiveness: Another facet of self-responsible communication is that of being assertive. A current movement of some importance is called "assertiveness training." Being assertive requires an awareness of distinguishing between aggressiveness, passiveness and assertiveness. All three concepts hinge on how we view human rights (not civil or legal rights). As human beings we have undeniable rights for being treated reasonably, considerately, respectfully and with dignity. When human rights are infringed upon, it isn't always the intrusion of government, the force of the other sex, or the "institution." Very often our human rights are violated because of the way we represent them. It is how we exercise our human rights that determines whether or not we experience the feelings of personal satisfaction.

When I am aggressive, I will treat you as if my rights were more important than your human rights. My sense of reality will be "correct," should we disagree. When I am passive, I will treat you as if your rights were more important than mine. My sense of reality will be subverted to yours, even when I am certain.* Assertiveness emphasizes the reciprocity of human rights and responsibility.

> Imagine the following scenario from a QC. The facilitator is interacting with a participant who is complaining: "The time of these meetings is really unhandy for me. I would like to have the time changed to 4:00 p.m. and the day of the meeting changed to Thursday."
>
> Aggressive Facilitator Response: "Lookit! I am facilitator here a I will tell you when the meeting times and dates will be."
>
> Passive Facilitator Response: "Oh, golly gee-whiz! I'm sorry for the inconvenience. I'm sure I can rearrange my schedule and perhaps others will also rework their schedules so we can meet your needs."

*Winston Churchill once said, "A passive person is one who feeds the hungry crocodile in hopes of being eaten last."

Assertive Facilitator Response: "I am sorry that the time and day of our sessions has become a problem for you. Let's check to see if others are being inconvenienced and if it is a problem for many others, we can renegotiate our meeting arrangements."

Basically, the assertive concept is based on the idea that win-lose outcomes are not as desirable as compromise and adaptability in interpersonal conflict. Further, feelings are addressed irresponsibly from an aggressive posture (name calling, threatening, domineering) or a passive posture (suppression, whimpering, dependent). Assertive behavior calls for being fully responsible for one's feelings in terms of how feelings are expressed. It is important to note that being assertive does not guarantee that its application will help someone "get his or her way" in a disagreement. (That would be an aggressive demand.) Furthermore, assertiveness is useful for other than conflict situations. It is important that feelings, bad and good, be expressed in the present. There are some individuals who are simply too timid to express any kind of feeling. The concept of assertiveness can help supply shy people with the necessary courage and provide them guidelines for making positive statements as well as expressing negative thoughts and feelings. Assertiveness increases the chances that interpersonal contact will be more constructive. The assertive person will probably also have greater self-esteem.

Exercise Eight: Assertiveness

1. Purpose: By acting out (role playing) each of the three interpersonal styles (aggressiveness, passiveness and assertiveness), the participants can begin to distinguish the non-verbal and verbal expressions that are consistent with each of the interpersonal styles.

2. Organization: Assemble in trios, identifying themselves as "A" - "B" - "C".

3. Instructions: "This activity will allow you to role play three styles of interpersonal behavior, i.e., aggressive, passive and assertive. Scenes will be presented to you and you are to react, in turns, to the scene according to the role that has been assigned to you."

Scene 1: You are engaged in an important conversation with another adult. A child (student) has already interrupted you several times with trivial requests and questions, e.g., "What time will we have lunch?," "I can't get the top off of this can," "Do you have the pencil sharpener?" etc. The child is now interrupting your conversation for the fifth time in

the last 10 minutes. Your patience is thin. You look at the child and respond to this last interruption:

"A" - aggressively
"B" - passively
"C" - assertively

Facilitator: Allow 3 to 4 minutes for discussion after each role play. Were the members of the trio able to distinguish each style by the role-played scenes? What characteristic behaviors accompany each of the styles? For example, aggressive behavior usually carries with it a loud tone of voice, pointing finger, etc.

Scene 2: You feel very possessive about your recently purchased automobile. You are conscientious about keeping it clean, well-serviced, and in good running order. So far you have been pleased that there are no "parking lot dents and scratches". Since it is an expensive car, you have already invested a lot of money and have another two years of monthly payments ahead.

A friend, someone you have known casually for about six months, complains that her car is not running well (because she doesn't take good care of it, you suspect) and asks to borrow your car for a ski trip. "I will give you a full tank of gas when my friends (whom you have never met) and I return next Monday or Tuesday." Your friend is persistent and persuasive in her request to borrow your car. You respond to the request:

"A" - assertively
"B" - aggressively
"C" - passively

Facilitator: Allow 3 or 4 minutes for discussion after each role play. How convincing were the partners in their role plays? Were their behaviors consistent with their words and their roles?

Scene 3: You are in a restaurant with friends. Your orders have just been served and all are commenting on how

marvelously delicious their first bites are. Your first bite is spoiled by the fact that your order is still cold. It has not been cooked properly, and so you explain your plight to the waiter. He takes your order back to the kitchen and you encourage your friends to "go ahead, eat while your meals are good." After a long wait, while your friends continue to eat, the waiter returns apologetically, "I am sorry for the delay. The cook kept your dish in the oven for a long time and it may be a little overcooked." As you look at the dish, it is obvious that it has been burned. Your friends are finishing their entrees. You respond to the waiter:

"A" - passively
"B" - assertively
"C" - aggressively

Facilitator: Allow 3 or 4 minutes for discussion after each role play. Focus on how convincing the participants were in their roles. Which roles have been easier, or more difficult, to play?

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4. Follow Up: Commonly, participants will drift into conversation about the scene and lose sight of their task, i.e., focusing on interpersonal styles. Although the participants may find it frustrating, because they are enjoying their conversation, it is important that the facilitator keep them on task. Describing one's last "bad experience" at a restaurant, for example, does little to help them understand the differences between aggressiveness, passiveness and assertiveness.

5. Additional notes: A variation of this exercise is to have two of the trio (third person acts as observer and recorder for feedback) carry on a role-played dialogue for a minute or two with one person being assertive and the other role-playing a stimulus. For example, 'A' is a traffic cop who has just stopped 'B' for a traffic violation. 'C' is observer. Either 'A' or 'B' can be assigned to demonstrate assertive behavior.

Another variation is to have the person role-playing assertiveness start the role play from an aggressive or passive posture and shift to being assertive during the dialogue. For example, in real life most of us are passive when stopped by a traffic cop. The observer tries to pick up cues that indicate the shift from aggressive or passive to being assertive.

> Being assertive is respecting others' rights to human dignity while not relinguishing your own.

Postscript on expressing feelings: Earlier in this monograph the notion was presented that feelings often have limited disclosure potential because of individuals' lack of creative expression. Although adjectives, e.g., "I feel happy," "I feel upset," etc., are the most readily used descriptors of feelings, the use of metaphors and visceral reports can add to one's range of expression. "I feel like a motherless child," is far more revealing than "I feel lonely." One person reported his feelings in a group this way: "I feel like a pygmy in the midst of a company of giants that have turned their backs on me," much more powerful report than, "I feel rejected and inferior." "I feel warm toward you" is a visceral report of positive affect. "My hear is pounding rapidly and my jaws are clenched tightly as I hear your pessimistic monologue." This would be a here-and-now report of negative feelings in which the speaker is in tune with the physical responses associated with his or her feelings.

USING NON-VERBAL INFORMATION

> Writer (to movie producer Sam Goldwyn): Mr. Goldwyn, I'm telling you a sensational story. I'm only asking you for your opinion and you fall asleep."
> Goldwyn: "Isn't sleeping an opinion?"

The saying, "You cannot not communicate," is self-evident when you think about it. Even silence can carry powerful messages. The belief that non-verbal "language," once learned, opens new horizons of human comprehension is both true and false, hopeful and frightening. Like a developing artist, sensitivities sharpen with increased awareness, practice and experience, and so it is with the use of non-verbal information. Since the efficiency of communication is a matter of degree, sharpened sensitivity and skill with non-verbal information will improve interpersonal contacts.

If it were possible to "read" body messages in a Swengali-like fashion, there would be no mystery or tentativeness to the non-verbal contribution to interpersonal communication. It is the false expectation that we are capable of "reading" (penetrating another person's 'hidden' intentions or meaning) that makes this matter false and frightening sometimes. To believe that there is a single "right" interpretation of non-verbal signals does little to promote effective communication. There is a

crucial attitudinal point that must be addressed before getting into the methods for using non-verbal information.

Summed up:

> THE MEANING OF NON-VERBAL BEHAVIOR IS IN THE MIND OF THE OBSERVER, NOT IN THE BEHAVING PERSON.

And this is where we return once again to the issue of self-responsibility. If it were possible to memorize a list of non-verbal behaviors and their universal meanings,* we would not have to risk much of ourselves in becoming involved interpersonally. We would be dealing in fact and permanence when, in reality, people do not and cannot interact with such certainty. In terms of efficiency, interpersonal communication is always a matter of degree, and we can improve efficiency by trying to get to know others better and allowing ourselves to be better known by others in a clearer, more authentic manner.

Exercise Nine: Non-Verbal

1. Purpose: Provide an opportunity to experience the fact that feelings can be transmitted without words, while thoughts are difficult to transmit without words.

2. Organization: Assemble in pairs.

3. Instructions: I will give you five different messages, one at a time. You are to convey the message to your partner non-verbally, i.e., grunts are OK, but NO WORDS. I will allow approximately 20 to 30 seconds for you to convey each message before I present the next message.

   a. I am tired.
   b. I believe in capital punishment.
   c. I like you.
   d. I think Reaganomics is hurting the poor.
   e. I am upset by the effects of Reaganomics.

4. Follow Up: Which of the five messages were easier to transmit? What are some things you observed to arrive at your conclusion or hunch?
   Messages a - c - e were feeling messages while b - d were cognitive.

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*The believers of universal meanings of non-verbal "language" claim that arms folded tightly across the chest is a signal for suppressed hostility. What do we do with our arms when we are cold? Are we suppressing hostility when we are cold?

Albert Mehrabian's research reported that resolving the general meaning and impact of an inconsistent message depended 7% on the actual words, 38% on the tone of voice and 55% facial expression and body posture. These are interesting data in light of the conclusion that feelings are transmitted primarily through non-verbal cues. Thoughts, on the other hand, require words. Statements 2 and 4 in the non-verbal exercise were cognitive and, as a result, were more difficult to convey non-verbally. Interpersonal contact provides rich resources of non-verbal cues, usually presented simultaneously and in multiple fashion; i.e., not all non-verbal messages will come from only the hands, tone of voice, etc. There are times when the speaker's excitement or complexity of expression results in such a cascade of data that it becomes information "overload." The point of this caution is to say that there is an abundance of information, and sometimes a QC facilitator may not do anything for fear that something of greater importance will be missed. It is probably impossible to catch all of the non-verbal data that is available to you, so, trusting the intuitions that you do have and offering them in a timely, tentative, and self-responsible manner are the basics of using non-verbal information. Following a brief discussion of the sources of non-verbal data, methods for using these data will be presented.

Sources of non-verbal data:

Eyes

Mouth and Voice Tone

Body Action/Posture/Proximity

Eyes: Of all the facial features, the eyes are probably sending the most non-verbal messages. Although the volume of messages from the eyes is beyond what one observer could process, using even a portion of the information is invaluable. Closed eyes may indicate a temporary flight - into self or away from others. Absence of eye contact may signal retreat or disdain. People who appear unwilling to sustain eye contact may prefer to relate to others as objects and tend to intellectualize as a characteristic defense mechanism. These individuals seem to shift from momentary eye-to-eye connection to "seeing" into space behind the person they are addressing. They disconnect from others or go into themselves. Once they have done this, they are essentially talking to themselves and have phased out of the relationship. The eye contact circuit breaks and the human connection seems to lose power.

On the other hand, people who constantly look into another's eyes may be seeking approval or desire to be in control. Eyes can be pleading or penetrating. A person who glares with widened eyes is sending a clear message as is the person keeps glancing at a watch while you are talking. Rapid eye movement suggests a need to escape while rapid eye lid blinking hints disagreement.

None of these possibilities are presented as fact. The person with blinking eye lids may have an eye irritation. The point is to urge you to become increasingly aware of the likelihood that a person's eye action, among other non-verbal and verbal cues, is correlated with a person's internal state of feeling and thought. You cannot know if a connection exists unless you have the courage to check it out in a tentative and caring manner.

Mouth and voice tone: The lines around the mouth are often as telling as if the mouth were speaking words. Pursed lips of disapproval, corners of the mouth turned up in pleasure or down in annoyance or sadness are close to being universal non-verbal signals, and often these non-verbal cues are offered unconsciously. The smile that is not in harmony with the verbal message is usually quite apparent, like the self-conscious giggle, or sometimes the clearing of the throat.

The tone and volume of voice are rich sources of non-verbal information. A person's voice may lack impact - sounding hollow, droning, meek, submissive, tentative - or it can be rich, mellow, or commanding. A voice can be a little boy's or girl's or the voice of an overbearing father or consoling mother. The tone of voice is important to listen to carefully as it is a rich source of information for developing hunches about another person's momentary internal state.

Body Action/Posture/Proximity: Although we do not intend to provide a comprehensive discussion of non-verbal cues, in this section we hope to tease the reader's interest, leading to further thinking and experimenting.

Hands held palms up suggests a non-defensive stance and a willingness to receive messages. Hand(s) obscuring the mouth may indicate hesitation in speaking. Fingers interlaced hint reservation. Twirling a paper clip or rubber band could mean inner tension ir it could mean boredom. Twisting hands, hands that shake, wet hands, cold hands, clenched hands, inwardly pointing hands each have different non-verbal implications. A pointing index finger, particularly if it is punctuating emphatic words, speaks very loudly.

Feet and legs offer valuable non-verbal clues, although they are frequently overlooked in favor of cues emitted from the waist up, especially from the neck up. Tightly crossed legs, tapping feet, and constantly shifting feet hing of inner tensions. Crossed legs with a foot kicking or bouncing sometimes reflects boredom. Legs and feet outstretched or taking off the shoes are indications of relaxed openness. Cues presented by the hands and feet, like all non-verbal indicators, should be considered in the context of overall interactions and verbal exchange.

A torso leaning forward, held rigidly upright, or slumped all send different non-verbal messages. Deep sighs, rapid breathing, a rising flush, holding the head in hands, chewing on the nails, changes in neck and head postures, changes in overall body posture, shaking of the pencil or finger authoritatively, doodling, subtle pushing back of chairs,

wiggling in the seat, removing coats, loosening ties, clicking nails, chewing on glasses, taking them on and off - all are silent signals that reflect probable internal states.

Not only the posture of two people talking, but the distance between them is a significant indicator of their relationship. Everyone has his or her own unconscious personal tolerance for physical closeness, and the interesting thing is to note that the tolerance changes under certain conditions. Conversation between intimates or close friends can occur comfortably when it is almost nose-to-nose. Talking with total strangers requires reasonable distance. Generally, when the talk is between hostile parties, considerable spatial distance is preferred. There are two major points when considering proximity and interpersonal communication. One, by observing the distance individuals choose in a conversation, you have a pretty fair indication of how they see themselves in relation to other(s). Secondly, since all of us have our own personal preferences for physical distance in conversation, the QC facilitator must be sensitive not to intrude beyond the preferred limit. Physical space preferences are like psychological space preferences. There is validity to the psychobabble phrases about "space", e.g., "I need my space," "I'll let you into my space," etc.

Exercise Ten: Territoriality

1. Purpose: To provide an opportunity for actually experiencing the concept of personal territory.

2. Organization: This activity requires open space, ideally a minimum of about 20' across, or the size of a normal classroom. The facilitator may have to move desks and furniture to create the necessary open space.

   Divide all participants into two equal groups, lined shoulder-to-shoulder and facing the other group, allowing as much space as possible between the two facing groups.

3. Instructions: "Visually identify someone in the opposite line who will be your partner. Point to each other to make visual contact and confirm that the two of you will be partners for this exercise.

   When you have clearly identified your partner in the other line, put your arms up at a right angle to your body and slowly start walking toward your partner while maintaining your outstretched arms (a la Frankenstein). As you slowly approach your partner in a direct line, the moment you feel the slightest discomfort at being so close you are to yell, "STOP!" to your partner and then visually measure the distance between you."

4. Follow Up: If neither partner yells, "STOP!", they will end up belly-to-belly, with their arms overlapping each other, perhaps embracing. Allow time for the partners to discuss their experience with each other. "What was the experience like for you?" "Did you actually sense a space that you wished to protect?" "Did you sense that you were 'violating' another person's space?" "Were there any non-verbal indications of meta-messages from your partner?"

5. Additional notes: Most often when people are seriously involved in this activity the comfortable space is about 18" apart, or the distance established by the outstretched hands overlapping. Much of the experience depends upon how well the partners know each other beforehand. Good friends, if they are being honest, will probably have a greater tolerance for physical closeness than will total strangers. Commonly, participants, particularly the shy ones, will not say "STOP!" although they are actually experiencing considerable embarrassment and discomfort. This might be a productive topic to explore in the large group discussion.

Keep in mind that although there is solid evidence to support the notion of needs and preferences for space, the conclusions you draw from your awareness should be tentative and adjustable. The person who seems to need extra distance may be temporarily self-conscious about garlic breath. The person who seems to continually intrude into others' spaces may be nearsighted or have a hearing loss.

> There is more non-verbal data than a single observer can possibly digest.

Applying Awareness of Non-Verbal Information

It has been stressed emphatically that non-verbal signals cannot be interpreted with certainty. To suggest such a thing is irresponsible, but to ignore their potential for maximizing and enriching communication is equally irresponsible. How these data can be used constructively by a QC facilitator is our next concern.

Despite possible hopes of using non-verbal data for "figuring other people out," no one has the right to penetrate another person's private world. An individual who chooses not to disclose a thought or a feeling is entitled to that choice. Non-verbal data should not be used to

"trick" another person into self-revelation, nor should they be used to apply pressures to do so. It is impossible to know, by virtue of observing non-verbal behavior, what, exactly, is going on within another person. However, when there is an apparent discrepancy between the spoken word and observed behavior, the tendency is to accept the interpretation based on observation. "NO! I'm NOT angry!" spoken in a loud voice by a scowling person is not very convincing. Unless the speaker adjusts words to match behavior (or vice versa), we still do not KNOW which of the two conflicting messages is truest.

A constructive method for employing non-verbal awareness is to offer your observation, and its meaning for you, as information the other person may wish to use for his or her own sense of clarity. In offering the non-verbal observation you are not trying to prove the validity of your interpretation; you are offering it simply to invite continued dialogue that, it is hoped, will be more open, clear, and mutually beneficial.

Example:

> Susie, a third grader, was complaining to her teacher that Jimmy had put a live, fuzzy worm in her lunch pail. With turned down mouth, deep scowl and stabbing finger in Jimmy's direction, she vented her anger and disgust at what Jimmy had done to her. As the teacher tried to remedy the situation and let justice prevail, she noted that Susie was beginning to smile. The teacher's first impulse was to say, "Susie, you're glad to see Jimmy in trouble, aren't you?" Remembering that she (teacher) could not really KNOW what prompted Susie's smile, she said, instead, "Susie, I am confused. You are telling me about how awful this situation is and yet I see you smiling. You smile does not fit what you are saying. Can you help me understand?"
>
> Susie paused reflectively and answered, "I've never known anyone who could pick up a worm with their bare hands. I guess I kind of admire Jimmy for doing something I can't do." Then, with a sudden return to her frown, "I still don't like him putting worms in my lunch."

The point of this illustration is the teacher's awareness of not stating her interpretation as fact. Rather, she expressed her confusion that resulted from the conflicting messages and identified the sources (what she heard and what she saw).

Non-verbal cues often are emitted unconsciously. Bringing the cues to the awareness of the person can be a special gift if it helps to clarify what might otherwise remain unconscious and/or ambiguous. A Gestalt counseling technique is effective in helping clarify thoughts and feelings that may exist at an unconscious level.

Imagine a scene in which someone is seated with crossed legs, the top leg absent-mindedly kicking as he talks about his mild irritation with his boss. The person is asked to exaggerate the kicking motion. As he is intensifying the kicking motion, he is asked if images occur to him while doing the exercise. "Yes! I pictured my boss with me kicking him really hard in the rear end trying to get him to be reasonable. I guess I am more upset with him than I realized!"

Our last word about non-verbal information and its potential for improving interpersonal contact. If the thought has not occurred to you already, it makes sense to think that everything discussed about <u>your</u> consciously influencing <u>others'</u> communication patterns is clearly reciprocal. By becoming more alert to how <u>you</u> can improve interpersonal communication, you are also subject to the impact from others. You are going to be more responsive to people who send clear, unambiguous messages and whose words and behavior match. You will share more of your thoughts, feelings and perceptions with those whose non-verbal signals suggest, "Please continue. What you are saying is interesting." If, for example, you catch yourself smiling as you make a negative comment, that is your clue to check what you <u>really</u> mean. If you catch you hand covering your mouth, does it mean that you are holding back? If you catch yourself gazing out the window as a QC participant speaks, what does that suggest to you? Becoming increasingly aware of others' non-verbal behavior can provide you with a method for monitoring your own.

The meaning of non-verbal behavior is tentatively determined by the observer.

AVOIDING INVOLVEMENT AND RESPONSIBILITY

In our society we have developed an interesting language pattern which allows us to escape full responsibility for what we say. The pattern is employed, usually unconsciously, so frequently and naturally that most listeners are oblivious to it. In this section we shall explore ways in which self-responsibility is avoided. It should be apparent by now that we are promoting the desirability of QC participants being responsible for themselves and their contributions to the group's progress. By becoming aware of language patterns that allow a person to relinquish responsibility, the QC facilitator can bring about efforts to change the pattern. Certainly, participants who desire to be involved in the QC process will benefit from the facilitator's awareness and efforts. In addition, a skilled QC facilitator can use his or her awareness to try to make it less easy for those who are choosing to be <u>uninvolved</u>. No effort will be expended to force people to participate or to make them uncomfortable if they don't. A QC facilitator would be remiss, however, if he or she did not work toward inviting everyone's full and honest participation. The awareness of the language pattern is a focus on how pronouns, verbs and questions are used in speech patterns.

Exercise Eleven: Self-Responsibility

1. Purpose: Experience how easily we use language to gloss over self-responsibility when we speak.

2. Organization: This paper-pencil exercise is completed independently and then they assemble in groups of 3 or 4 to compare their responses and discuss their reasoning.

3. Instructions: "On a piece of paper you are to write three sentences that begin with 'People are...' You are to do this independent of anyone else. Write the first things that come to mind. Free associate, do not edit."

Allow 3 or 4 minutes for them to write their sentences.

"Now that you have completed three sentences starting with 'People are...' please write three more sentences that begin with 'I can't...' Again, free associate and do not edit. Write the first three things that come to mind starting each sentence with 'I can't..."

Allow another 3 or 4 minutes to complete the second set of sentences.

"Now that you have completed six sentences, I would like for you to go back over the sentences. Cross out the 'People are' part and replace it with 'I am,' leaving the rest of the sentence intact. Where you wrote 'I can't...', cross it out and replace it with 'I won't..."

When this task is completed, have the groups reassemble into 3's and 4's.

"In your small groups, go over your sentences and claim those that truly fit you and reject those that do not. For example, if you wrote, 'People are no damned good' and it now reads, 'I am no damned good,' discuss the new statement's appropriateness for you."

4. Follow Up: After the small groups have had sufficient time for discussing their sentences, ask the large group if there were individuals who found statements that absolutely were inappropriate for them. More important, were there sentences that when changed, acquired a new, and personally relevant meaning?

5. Additional notes: This exercise often leads to very intense discussions about values, self-concepts and being self-responsible.

Personalizing Pronouns

On TV news a young man, who had just been rescued from his blazing third floor apartment, was being interviewed. He said, "You get scared when it is pitch black with smoke and you can't see anything. You are wondering if the firemen can get to you and get you out of that inferno safely." Who was the young man talking about? Himself, obviously, yet he is referring to "you." this is an example of how easily and naturally we engage in pronouns that, to some extent, relinquish responsibility for what is being said. If the young man had replaced the "you" with "I" it certainly would be a more intense and accurate statement.

Another form of depersonalizing language patterns is "it-talk." A QC participant may make a statement like, "It is dull in our group today." Probably a more accurate, personalized statement would be, "I am bored with our group today." Notice how "it" is far less responsible than the more direct expression. "It is cold today" means "I am cold today."

One of the more obvious forms of using language patterns to relinquish self-responsibility is talking as if speaking for others. "Nobody likes being pushed around" more likely means "I don't like being pushed around." "We want our opinion heard" reflects "I want my opinion heard." Making general statements clearly diverts the focus of responsibility to (unknown) others. Rarely do we KNOW what others are thinking anyway, and to make general statements about what "others" are thinking is not only relinquishing self-responsibility, it is technically incorrect as a rule.

Changing Verbs

Many verbs are carelessly interchanged and used as is comprehension were automatic. Interchanging "listen" and "hear" is a good example. "I need to be heard" is more accurate if "heard" is changed to "listened to." We have already discussed the distinction between hearing and listening earlier. On close examination of the sentence, the "need" part of the sentence would be improved if "need" were changed to "want." "We need to talk about this matter" detracts from the more honest, direct, and responsible statement, "I want to talk about this matter."

This attention to verb exchanges may seem like antics with semantics, but there is a very important issue to be addressed here. If we seriously intend to sharpen interpersonal communication, the whole issue of self-responsibility becomes pivotal. Using words like "can't", when in reality the speaker is more honest and direct with "won't", is ignoring the choice involved. "I can't agree with you," makes it appear that the speaker is incapable of agreement, an unlikely situation, since the speaker is choosing his or her position. The "I have to" statements also imply that the speaker has no choices. "I can't go to lunch with you today because I have to go shopping" is much less direct and honest than the more authentic, "I won't (really could if the speaker wanted to) go to lunch with you today because I choose (rather than have to) to use my lunch hour for shopping."

THE NATURE OF QUESTIONS

Questions are commonly used to consciously or unconsciously relinquish self-responsibility and will be discussed in detail in the next section.

Questions

Questions are a natural part of our conversational patterns. Questions are also the substance of interrogations. Efforts at communicating are intended to invite mutually satisfying, beneficial relationships. Interrogations are intended to entrap. So, questions can be like a double-edged sword that can render positive and/or negative effects. If we know our purpose to be that of improved communication, it is important to be aware of what styles of questioning will make our goal of communication more difficult to achieve. Despite the most noble intentions, the way a question is asked can lead to misinterpretation by the person who is expected to answer. It is difficult to converse without using questions in some form, and increased awareness can help the QC facilitator avoid less efficient questioning styles. In this section we shall examine ways to soften the interrogative sound of some questions, describe how to use questions for encouraging someone to continue talking, and identify questions that are more honestly and effectively transformed into personal statements.

Avoiding the appearance of interrogation: "Why" questions are deadly. Depending upon the mental set of the person expected to answer, it is so easy to hear a demand for explanation, justification, or verification when attempting to answer a question that begins with "why."

> Imagine a scene where one teacher is complaining to another about the amount of his own personal funds being spent on classroom materials. He is asked by a colleague, "Why don't you speak to the principal about the extra money you need?" Perhaps the questioner is really intending to explore options. The complaining teacher, however, may feel judged for not having the courage to be assertive and ask his superior for the funds he needs. The teacher would probably not feel judged if the question were rephrased, "What other options have you considered for getting money?"

"Why" questions commonly elicit a "because" answer, which strongly suggests an attempt to justify or explain one's decision or behavior. "Why is your class size smaller than the others?" may be a question prompted by innocent curiosity. "Because that's what the principal assigned to me!" is the type of answer that could well carry an edge of defensiveness.

"If you're worried about your students' achievement test scores, why don't you do something about it?" is sure to imply that the worried teacher has not been doing his or her job. "Which area of achievement seems to need more attention?" is a softer way of getting to the same concern.

We can make judgments, ask probing questions or evaluative questions that start with something other than "why." "What did you do THAT for?" might as well have been asked, "Why did you do THAT?" the point is, "why" questions are such a natural, ready part of our language patterns that we ask them regardless of our intentions, good or bad, not anticipating how "why" questions can accidentally be misinterpreted. If our intention is to try to communicate more efficiently, and we can reduce the risk of misinterpretation by listening to ourselves and rephrasing "why" questions into another form where possible.

Questions for encouraging dialogue: "Is," "do," "did," "will" type questions are perhaps the most common, frequent, and natural form of questions. "Is it a good movie?", "Do you like the movie?", "Did you enjoy the movie?", "Will you be going to the movie?" are examples of closed questions. Closed questions invite (or, at least, do not discourage) responses like yes or no. Open-ended questions, on the other hand, are designed to encourage the responder to elaborate. "What were the highlights of the movie for you?" "What is it about STAR WARS that makes it so special?" are difficult to answer in one word.

There is not an absolute rule for guaranteeing elaborated answers. The responder could have answered "nuthin" to the open-ended examples above. You could also elicit a half-hour monologue by asking an excited person, "Did you like the movie?" The concept of open-ended vs. closed-ended questions is the issue here.

In a QC the facilitator could ask only closed questions and eager, cooperative participants will feel encouraged to say what is on their minds. Eager, cooperative participants do not require as much conscious effort to motivate as do shy or resisting participants who can easily escape involvement with yes or no responses to closed questions. As in the use of other communication skills, open-ended questions are designed to encourage meaningful dialogue. They are not intended to trick or pressure people into disclosing themselves.

Exercise Twelve: Questioning

1. Purpose: Experience the effort and thought required for concentrating on open-ended questions. As speaker, experience the invitation an open-ended question presents and the (probable) irritation that constant why and closed questions can create.

2. Organization: Assemble in trios, identifying participants as "A" - "B" - "C".

3. Instructions: To "A" - "Talk about what you did last weekend or what you will do this coming weekend."

To "B" - "Ask questions as 'A' talks. Limit your questions to only open-ended questions. Make a tally of each question you ask."

To "C" - "Ask questions as 'A' talks. Limit your questions to only 'why' and closed-ended questions. Make a tally for each question you ask."

Allow approximately four minutes of "dialogue" between "A" and his or her questioning partners. Allow another four minutes for the trio to discuss their experience.

4. Follow Up: Raise the issue with "A," "Did you find it easier or more difficult to talk with one of your partners when compared with the other?" For the person assigned to ask open-ended questions, "Did you find your task to be hard work? What were some of the difficulties you encountered?" To the partner assigned to ask "why" and closed-ended questions, "What was your experience like? Did you find the task difficult or easy?"

After the four minute dialogue and the four minute discussion, partners rotate so that "B" talks about their weekend, "C" asks open-ended questions, and "A" asks "why" and closed-ended questions. After that cycle is completed, "C" then talks about his or her weekend, etc.

Be certain to remind the participants to tally each question.

5. Additional notes: The reason for the tally requirement is to help "motivate" the participants to engage in a task that isn't completely easy or comfortable. In normal conversation we wouldn't concentrate solely on questions. The tally also becomes the focal point for discussion.

Changing questions into statements: The issue of being self-responsible is a repeated theme throughout this monograph. Just as using indirect reports, impersonal pronouns and certain verbs tend to relinquish self-responsibility, so do our speech patterns often allow us unconsciously to use questions to the same end. "Do you think 80 mph is safe on this highway?" asks a passenger of his driver as they zip down the freeway. Actually, there are meta-messages in the passenger's question. "I am frightened for you to drive this (80 mph) fast." Or, "I will be embarrassed if the police stop us for speeding. Everyone will be gawking

at us and the cop's red light." Asking, "Do you think..." leaves the responsibility for the statement with the driver and does not reflect the real concern of the speaker.

"Do you know what time it is?" asks a bored person of her reveling companion. "Can we vote now?" asks a fidgeting committee member. "How do you propose to carry off this BIG deal of yours?" asks a business associate with raised eyebrows. These are examples of questions that have obvious meta-messages. A cleaner, more authentic manner of presenting oneself is to make statements rather than leave meta-messages in the form of questions. Remember, improved, efficient communication reduces meta-messages that flow between persons involved in interpersonal contact.

> Questions are a natural part of dialogue which sometimes diminish effective communication.

FACILITATING GROUPS

The synergy of a QC group depends upon the various and multiple individual contributions to a common goal. The goals may be those of solving work or interpersonal problems, reorganizing an existing system, getting to know colleagues better, or simply having fun. Goals may differ, but the process for efficiently achieving goals relies heavily on the QC facilitator's ability to bring forth individual contributions that build group synergy. The interpersonal communication skills described previously focused upon individuals interacting. Interaction among individuals is the substance of building synergy. As we addressed the facilitator's interaction with individuals in the previous section of this monograph, let us now look at the four functions of a QC group facilitator.

Four Functions of Group Leadership

The role of the QC group facilitator involves expertise plus clear acceptance of the responsibility of leadership. The person of the facilitator, in the final analysis, defines the role. Who he or she is - his or her authenticity, awareness, degree of self-actualization, empathy, intelligence, self-acceptance, in short, "human-ness" - is the most relevant variable that this person brings to QC group leadership. Without these sensitivities, expertise is useless. Without expertise, the sensitivities are wasted. A knowledge of the functions of group leadership is essential preparation for the role of QC group facilitator.

These functions are analyzed in detail in this section. The functions interrelate and the whole is a great deal more than the sum of its components. Facilitators must go through their own process of

integrating these functions into a unified whole. The intent of this section is to specify the four functions: traffic-director; model; interaction catalyst; and communication facilitator.

Traffic Director

One function that requires active attention early in the group's life is traffic-directing. QC facilitators have to help participants become aware of behaviors that open communication channels and those that inhibit communication. As participants learn group membership responsibilities, traffic-directing interventions from the facilitator diminish. Often, the few interventions that are necessary after the early sessions are performed by the participants themselves.

Blocking questions: A vital traffic-directing function, one that meets with the most resistance, is that of blocking questions. As already discussed earlier, our normal speech patterns rely heavily on the

questioning form of communication. The awareness that a questioner controls the responder in subtle ways is only dimly perceived by most people. Group members tend to bring to the QC a heavy reliance on questions as a way of communicating. Leaders take away this self-protective, defensive "crutch" when they ask a member to abandon his or her traditional way of controlling others through the "hooks" of questions, and to come out in the open with a clear statement of what he or she really means to say. At first the participant feels angry and hostile, showing impatience and resistance. QC facilitators have to determine when the price of intervention in terms of irritation to members is likely to be inhibiting or facilitating, and use their judgments as to when to intervene and when to abstain. The blocking of questions must be done gently, without rejecting the questioner.

Two examples might be:

Member (John): Why do you feel like that, Paul?

Facilitator: John, you have phrased your concern so that Paul doesn't know how it is with you. It might be more helpful if you make clear what you have in mind.

(Intervention)

John: Paul, I guess I don't relate to what you're saying because I don't think I would feel that way.

(John's first statement implies judgment. His second statement is a clear message of where he stands concerning the issue with Paul.)

Member (Mary): How do you feel about it, Ralph?

Facilitator: I wish you would make it clear to Ralph how you feel about it, Mary.

(Intervention)

Mary: You make me mad, Ralph. I want you to say how you feel about the situation, and I'm irritated with you because you haven't.

Blocking "gossip": Blocking "gossip" is far easier than blocking questions. To block questions, the leader must work against ingrained speech patterns. In "gossip" situations, members are talking about another member rather than directly to the member. For example, one member may refer to something that occurred, or a reaction, or a concern that involves another member, and addresses still another member or the group as a whole. In such situations the QC facilitator should intervene and ask the member to speak directly to the other member concerned.

QC facilitator interventions to block "gossip" are inherently inconsistent. When they direct one member to speak directly to another, rather than speaking about him or her, leaders are themselves speaking about the other member. This problem seems imbedded in the English language and appears to be a necessary case of "Don't do as I do, but as I say" on the part of the intervening facilitator. One way to handle this inconsistency is to call the group's attention to the necessity for the leader's intervention being stated in the third person while asking members to communicate in the first person.

Examples of blocking "gossip" might be:

Joe: Pete, I am upset with you now for doing such a silly thing.

Bill: Joe, I'm mad at Pete, too.

Facilitator: Bill, you are talking about Pete. Please talk directly to him.

(Intervention)

Bill: Pete, I am mad at you too, and would like you to stop saying things that you think you have to apologize for.

Mary: Pete didn't mean what he said, I am sure.

Facilitator: Mary, you can say that directly to Pete.

(Intervention)

Mary: Pete, I don't think you really meant your comments to be so apologetic.

Blocking the there-and-then: In helping participants focus on the here-and-now, leaders may have to continue their traffic directions throughout the life of the group. Some participants seem able to learn quickly to exist in the present time and place. Others need direction from the facilitator or members to relate their comments to the here-and-now QC life. Two techniques are available for accomplishing this - presentizing and personalizing.

(Presentizing) Some there-and-then content may be appropriate, but QC facilitators should constantly monitor this content for its current relevancy. What do a member's verbalizations mean to him or her right now? Interventions by the leader bring participants back to the present, away from reliving the past or rehearsing the future.

(Personalizing) As members talk about the there-and-then world, they tend to talk in generalities. In the interpersonal communication section of this monograph we noted that speakers often use "we," "people," "all

of us," and "they," rather than taking full responsibility for their comments. Appealing to the authority of the majority is a way to control others and also a way to escape. A facilitator must intervene in the QC so that members learn to indicate clearly their responsibility for their own statements. The prelude to taking responsibility is to recognize first those habitual speech patterns that shift authority to others. A representative dialogue may illustrate:

Sue: Last week, during group, I was really shook up at the apathy this group has toward people's problems.

Facilitator: And apparently you still have some feelings about it now.

(Presentizing intervention)

Sue: Yeah, as a group we haven't helped each other at all.

Facilitator: It seems to me, Sue, that you can only talk for yourself. You can only talk for yourself. You may want to share your thoughts.

(Personalizing intervention)

Sue: Okay, I don't feel that I've been helped by anyone here at all, and I wish someone would help me.

Facilitator: Would you be more specific, please? Maybe there is someone in particular that you had in mind...here...now.

(Presentizing intervention)

Sue: Yeah, ...you, John, Mary, and you Pete - I respect your opinions and I wish each of you would give me something about what it is that might make people think I don't care about them. That's the message I have been getting from you three, and I'm disturbed by it. I guess I've also been saying that the group does not care ...and I think maybe that's what you've been telling me.

Facilitator: Understand, Sue - John, Mary and Pete are individuals. They can only speak for themselves. They are not the group.

Pete: I would like to respond, Sue, and give you some feedback on how you have come across to me...

Blocking super-parenting: Both males and females (this notion has been referred to as "super-mothering") often intervene in confrontations in an effort to assuage hostility, guilts, and pain. This is also referred to as "Red Crossing" or "bank-aiding." Although super-parentling is done in an apparent effort to be helpful, it can actually be highly manipulative.

Probably few members recognize their interventions as motivated by their own inability to confront emotions, that doing something for someone always risks an element of manipulation in the act.

Often in a group, one member may be engaged in a confrontation with another and the super-parent will say something "soothing." The intensity of the confrontation may be lessened and may even be diverted by such "soothing" effort. It seems preferable to come to some resolution over differences and super-parenting does not help the problem solving efforts. This concept is illustrated by the following examples:

John: Jim, when you shake your finger at me like that, I get all tight inside.

Mary (to John): Jim doesn't mean anything by it. He's just making a point.

Facilitator: Mary, you are denying John's feelings. John is saying something he wants Jim to hear.

(Intervention)

Mae: I feel betrayed. I believed him and now I know he lied to me. I guess I'm partly angry because I see myself being taken advantage of and made a fool of by my boss.

Mary: Well, Mae, we all have felt that way at times. I think everybody is made a fool of at one time or another. I remember once when my boss...

Facilitator: Excuse me, Mary. Mae is talking about something that is important to her. (To Mae) You were saying, Mae, that you are feeling angry and foolish about being deceived.

(Intervention)

Blocking mind-raping: One of the most difficult interventions to make is that of calling attention to the dynamic in which one participant makes assumptions about what the other person is thinking or feeling. Participants who are thus "interpreted" are negated and illegitimized. Their minds are raped, and they are possibly unaware of the process. As leaders perform their traffic-directing functions, they may bring into awareness the fact that a mind-rape has occurred or is occurring.

Mind-raping may be confused with feedback at times. The difference is subtle, but in the latter a participant is attempting to "read" another's frame of reference for the purposes of clarifying and reflecting. Mind-raping, on the other hand, is often presented from a superior posture as if the interpretation were a fact.

An example of mind-raping might be:

Maria: I wish I could like you, Henry, but I always have a feeling of wanting to get away from you.

Henry: That's because you think I am judging you.

(Mind-raping)

Facilitator: Henry, you're putting thoughts into Maria's mind and throwing the responsibility on to her.

(Intervention)

Henry: Okay, Maria, I guess I can't speak for what is in your mind, but when I am with you I...

A more subtle example of mind-raping might be:

Maria: When I am with you, Henry, I have a need to get away from you. I feel uneasy...

Henry: Yeah, you have an uneasiness in the stomach, you have fears of being with me, you have unrecognized sexual responses, and you really would like to confront me, but you can't. (Henry is a dime-store psychologist.)

(Mind-raping)

Facilitator: Hold it, Henry. You have put words to feelings that you only assume Maria has. I'd rather hear how it is with Maria from Maria.

(Intervention)

One more example of mind-raping might be:

Maria: When I am with you, Henry, I feel...

Henry: Mm-hmm, uneasy, uptight, like you would not want to be here...

(Mind-raping)

Facilitator: You interrupted Maria, Henry. I'd like to hear the rest of what she wants to say.

(Intervention)

Blocking invasion of privacy: One of the major traffic-directing functions of QC facilitators is to protect the privacy of participants. Questions comprise one speech pattern that may result in the invasion of privacy. The technique of question-blocking has already been addressed in this section. The leader also functions as traffic-director by blocking content that may invade privacy. One of the best ways to avoid "nosy-ness," or pressure to get participants to reveal more than they seem comfortable with, is to consciously keep the interaction in the here-and-now. Dredging up personal details from the past does little to promote the productivity of the QC. In fact, it is important to have a clear distinction between being personal and being open. Personal details focus on information about a person's life. Openness is revealing thoughts and feelings in the moment as they are occurring.

An example of blocking invasion of privacy might be:

Jim: Joe, How much did you make last year when you worked at Fairchild?

Facilitator: Joe, do you have any feelings about Jim's question?

(Intervention)

In this example, the leader intervenes in order to be certain that Joe can exercise his choices. Joe may not object to revealing the information Jim requested. However, a skilled leader must be present to help Joe speak directly. "That's none of your damned business," is not a direct report, yet may be the kind of response issued unless someone can help Joe speak directly and authentically. The leader's job is to divert pressure for revealing personal or intimate information that a participant seems reluctant to talk about. The key to effective leadership technique is to keep interaction in the here-and-now as much as possible.

> A QC facilitator's traffic-directing function is intended to foster a sense of personal security while encouraging participants to be open and honest with each other.

Model

The interventions described in the sample dialogues combined elements of the traffic-directing function, in which the leader intervenes to focus on the here-and-now in a participant's personal frame of reference, blocking invasion of privacy, and the there-and-then that dealt with past events or people outside the group. (By the way, something that has happened in the past may be resulting in feelings that are occurring right now. There may be a need for some historical information to clarify the feelings that exist within a person in the moment. However,

to dwell on past events and experiences is rarely productive to the group process.) These interventions also illustrate the function of modeling. In the preceding dialogues we attempted to show a leader who extends himself or herself as a risk taker in interpersonal contact, who is willing to offer tentative observations with no particular compulsion to be "right."

The QC facilitator functions best when modeling directness for mutual benefit, being in the here-and-now, not "gossiping," mind-raping or doing the things that interfere with productive and satisfying interaction. The effective model for the group takes full responsibility for what he or she states, and is willing to back off and listen when there is a difference. If you can think of the "ideal" participant, you may have the guidelines for being an effective QC facilitator. However, the modeling function is a facilitator's responsibility, and it might be easy to fall into the trap of being "just one of the gang." That is not absolutely crucial that the participants differentiate between the facilitator-participant roles, but it is vital that the facilitators do.

In the following illustration, the leader may be quite genuine in his or her expression, but the difference is that the leader attempts to model positive group behavior for participants, and does so without being phony or condescending.

Joe: I like people very much, and I want to be liked. I find it hard to talk to people I don't know. I wish I could get over that.

Mary: I was beginning to wonder if you were ever going to talk in this group, Joe.

Facilitator: Joe, I feel good about your opening up to our group. I like people, too, and I have had difficulty starting conversations with people who look like they'd be great to get to know. I have to remind myself that if I don't make the effort, maybe they won't either.

(Modeling)

Another example of facilitator modeling:

Gerry: I really enjoy it when you smile at me, Ada. You seem so warm and open to people. I feel like I have been invited to share something special together with you.

Facilitator: Yes, I've had the same kind of reaction to you, Ada. When you respond to me, I feel recognized and important, like I am someone you have good feelings for. I guess that's reciprocal; at least, I hope it is.

(Modeling)

Interaction Catalyst

Just as modeling function overlaps the traffic-directing function, so does the modeling function overlap the interaction catalyst function. To get group process moving, leaders do certain things for certain purposes. They serve as interaction catalysts so that people will get involved at a productive level, values will be examined, ideas explored, and an awareness of self will be heightened.

Leaders usually serve as interaction catalysts at the beginning of a session or series of sessions. They use, if necessary, some techniques to help participants move from the work or social world into the unique world of QC. As the participants learn membership skills and responsibilities, the leader may not have to continue functioning as a catalyst. Members will soon be able to plunge into deeper levels of interaction without help. At such times, of course, facilitators model, traffic-direct, and aid communication, but they do not have to catalyze interaction.

When leaders do choose to use and interaction catalyst technique, they may or may not choose to model the technique. A general guide to keep in mind is that the leader only models for the benefit of the group participants. Thus, if a technique has to be demonstrated in order to be effective, the facilitator is performing a modeling function.

Catalytic techniques for stimulating interaction can easily become a QC facilitator's "crutch," i.e., if nothing seems to be happening in the group within the first 3 minutes, use an activity. Practice and experience obviously will sharpen a QC facilitator's ability in terms of deciding when to use a catalytic activity. A catalyst is something that brings different components into interaction, and it is important for the facilitator to remember that. Once a technique or procedure influences interaction among participants, the leader should fade out as a technician and resume his or her functioning as traffic-director, model, and communication facilitator.

Examples of catalytic techniques:

In simple form, a QC facilitator may ask the group, "What's important for you to talk about today?" That is a catalytic technique attempting to stimulate the group's interaction.

QC groups are not encounter groups so some of the "heavier" catalytic techniques are inappropriate, but a light fantasy can be a stimulating catalyst for many participants. The facilitator asks the group to close their eyes and then in a semi-dramatic fashion creates a fantasy of "the BIG boss calling you in to ask your opinion of how the operation can be improved.Whatmight you want to say to the boss?" There might be a vigorous discussion of how the operation might be improved. However, there is no predictable result of a fantasy like this. Perhaps the most interesting thing is trying to determine who the BIG boss is. In one person's fantasy the BIG boss is someone with whom there is regular interpersonal contact. For someone else, it may be someone who is only known through the newspapers and TV.

Another simple catalytic activity for QC groups is to have the participants pair up and discuss those things that they agree upon as being similar and/or dissimilar in their work, and then have the pairs reassemble in the large group to discuss what had been discussed. This type of activity is particularly useful when individuals seem reluctant to talk in the larger group, perhaps because they haven't yet come to know each other and are "waiting for someone to go first."

The point of being an interaction catalyst is the facilitator's responsibility for influencing interaction among participants so they can bring their insights, contributions to the pair, trio, foursome...total group, in order to build synergy. That is what a catalyst is for QC.

> Catalytic activities are intended to stimulate group interaction. Once interaction occurs the activity has served its purpose.

Communication Facilitator

Facilitating communication within the group is your main function as QC facilitator.

(Paraphrasing) Much of the discussion that takes place in group interaction should have a focus if members are to become aware of meanings and implications. The facilitator reflects content, paraphrasing the material in fresh, new words, capturing the essence of the statements so that members can hear more accurately their own words and those of others.

Example:

Arlis: I really like my job and I think I do it well, but I've got this hang up about authority. Everytime my supervisor comes around, I freeze up inside. She must think I am some kind of creep! It's not her fault. She is pleasant enough. It's me!

Facilitator: ...and you're not sure how to overcome your discomfort with your boss.

Arlis: Right...I've watched my co-workers and they seem so relaxed even when they are being instructed or corrected by her.

Facilitator: ...which is something you'd like to be able to do.

(Reflecting affect) This response is difficult to learn, but once learned, becomes almost automatic. The danger of this verbal response pattern is that it can become trite and parrot-like, and therefore insulting. A QC facilitator must become sensitive in order to verbalize feelings and should be careful not to mind-rape in the process. Communication techniques are intended for the participants' benefit, and not to prove how alert and talented the facilitator is.

Example:

Greg: I really don't want to lose Betty, but I simply don't know what I can do to prevent it from happening.

Facilitator: That's a pretty helpless feeling.

Greg: Yeah, helpless. I'd be willing to do almost anything to keep her interested in a close relationship. But then, sometimes I get the feeling that it is all one-sided, with me making all the effort.

Facilitator: It seems like a double bind for you. You want Betty very much, but not at the price of losing your self-respect.

(Linking) The process of tying one member's comments to another member's comments may be helpful at times. Linking is more specific to group interaction than to interpersonal (one-to-one) communication. The linking responses may involve either ideas or feelings, and perhaps may link verbal and non-verbal messages.

Example:

Jeanne: The pressures of going to school, working, and trying to live a healthy, balanced life are overwhelming me.

Facilitator: That seems to be a recurring theme in our group. Can you identify with anyone else in our group who might be experiencing your feelings?

Another possible example of linking:

Facilitator: The way you abruptly sat up, Henry, gives me a hunch that Jeanne's concern might have struck a responsive chord in you.

(Sending clear messages) Another important facilitation skill is being a model of clear messages, those which minimize meta-messages. Paraphrasing and reflecting affect alone are insufficient for enhancing communication between people. A world of listeners would be a quiet place indeed.

One of the goals of a QC facilitator is to help members reduce their possible inhibitions about disclosure of immediate thoughts and feelings. Again, telling another person exactly what is on your mind at all times is not what is being proposed here. Sometimes, cruelty has been passed off as "being honest" or "telling it like it is." A QC group is an appropriate environment where self-disclosure in the here-and-now, followed by direct and honest feedback (clear messages) is a substance of building synergy.

A common tendency is to suppress or conceal feelings, to make less than a complete report of what is happening within us. Clear messages, then, are attempts to speak authentically in the here-and-now. Risks are involved. The person to whom you are speaking may not accept what you are saying. To have our good intentions misinterpreted does not feel good. On the other hand, withholding a clear message to avoid the risk does nothing to enhance meaningful communication. The QC facilitator must model sending clear messages and be alert to recognize when it is happening with group members.

(Clarifying) Clarifying is an attempt to see if another person's thoughts and feelings are as you think they are. The technique of clarifying can be in the form of a question (open-ended preferably) or a paraphrase. This is certainly important for group facilitators in terms of confirming their intuition and in modeling appropriate group behavior for participants. Perceptions are influenced by what is observed and said. Group members must have opportunities to express their perceptions so they may be confirmed, adjusted, or rejected. Misperceptions lead to prejudices and distortions.

Example:

Jim: John, you seem angry with me. You have been very quiet since I shared my feelings with you. I have a need to be clear about our relationship. What is happening with you right now?

John: I'm not upset, that's for sure, and I appreciate your concern for me. I have been thinking about what you said a while ago and I still need time to sort it out in my mind.

Had Jim not attempted to clarify with John the misinterpretation (of John's being angry) might have remained an interference between them. The chances of their establishing an open, caring relationship would most likely have been decreased.

> The most important QC leadership function is to help participants communicate clearly to each other.

(Summarizing) The technique of summarizing has already been mentioned in a previous section of this monograph. It is an important group procedure that should be used with clear purpose. The two primary purposes for summarizing are, 1) trying to restimulate a group that seems to have "bogged down" and 2) closing a group session.

When group interaction seems "stuck," i.e., not progressing, and none of the group members have emerged as a force to move it forward, the QC facilitator can regard this as the right time for a summary in an attempt to help redirect the group toward renewed interest in something previously discussed, or toward another topic, issue or concern. The facilitator should not be too hasty in doing this, however, because of the commitment to all members being responsible for what happens in the group. A facilitator who hastily resumes control in the group because there was a moment's lull is robbing participants of the opportunity to use their influence to move the group. Every group member should be r garded as a potential force, but he or she must be given the time to act. The feeling of doing nothing or "wasting time" is often the very motive for getting minimally involved group members to start some king of action to get the group moving again.

It takes patience as well as sensitivity and skill for a QC facilitator to encourage the best of participants' contributions. If the facilitator is really convinced that members' thoughts and awareness are drifting away for lack of action and involvement, the summary technique is dependable for helping the group refocus on why they are together. A summary is much like a lengthy paraphrase with a different purpose. Paraphrases are intentionally abbreviated and summaries intend to cover more content from a longer period of dialogue.

One important, yet subtle, distinction that a facilitator should consider in using a summary technique is the time to focus on feelings as part of the summary. When the intention is to restimulate the group's interaction, a review of feelings along with content is in order. If summary is being employed for purpose of bringing group interaction to a close, it is important that the leader talk about ideas and issues, and not the feelings that might have accompanied them. The rule of thumb is to try to lessen the here-and-now affectiveness toward the colse. If the facilitator's intention is to restimulate, it is better to try for here-and-now awareness and feelings, even if the feeling is boredom. If participants are committed to the group, the boredom becomes a very real here-and-now issue for discussion. It is a "problem" that needs attention; the group's attention.

Facilitator: "Allow me to pull my thoughts together about the things that we have been talking about. We talked about some ways the faculty can present their concerns to the administration. Several of you seem to suspect that faculty concerns and ideas are not taken too seriously. We also explored some reasons why Room 17 seems to be a continual problem. Not all of you are in agreement that Room 17 has become a "dumping ground" for our problem students. And although we're not all experiencing the same degree of optimism, there seems to be a consensus about QC's reducing some of the isolation we have experienced. Have all of you had a chance to say what is important to you? Are there no aras of concern or interest for you?"

Facilitator: "Allow me to pull my thoughts together about the things that we have been talking about. We talked about some ways the faculty can present their concerns to the administration. We also explored some of the reasons why Room 17 seems to be a continual problem. And, we talked about some of our hopes and reservations about our QC involvement. Have we all had ad chance to say what is important to us?"

One last word on communication skills and their importance to the QC group process. You, as QC facilitator, must continually remind yourself that the goal of the enterprise is to build synergy (the blending of individual energies) through group interaction. Your techniques are no longer consciously needed once the group is engaged in fruitful discussion. If the group begins to fade away from meaningful interaction, like telling "stories," complaining rather than problem solving, etc., it is your task to intervene. Your interventions can be in the form of directing questions, or perhaps in the form of a summary. There is no monograph or book to refer to when the time comes for you to do your job as QC facilitator. This monograph is intended to stimulate your thoughts and willingness to become a QC group facilitator. You, as QC group facilitator, can regard yourself as the "monitor of meaningfulness," which is not an easy assignment. We sincerely hope that this monograph will be of use to you as you develop into a competent QC facilitator.

FACILITATION SKILLS IN QUALITY CIRCLES

Post-Test

1. Sheldon Kopp's admonition about the "pervasive neurosis of our time" refers to people's compulsive need to be

   a. loved
   b. correct
   c. involved
   d. informed

2. 3 D's are:

   a. dumb, deceitful, or delusioned
   b. desperate, deranged, or devious
   c. deliberate, demanding, or discerning
   d. dopey, delirious, or deformed

3. The term clarifying, as used in this monograph, is

   a. when the listener points out the speaker's mistake.
   b. referring to the listener's concentration on the speaker's perception.
   c. when the listener clearly restates the speaker's message.
   d. intended to establish the truth of the listener's perception.

4. Efficient interpersonal communication is

   a. when decisions are made.
   b. speaking the same language.
   c. speaking clearly, precisely and succinctly.
   d. congruence between what is said and what is comprehended.

5. Which one of the following statements is TRUE?

   a. Feelings are a subjective acknowledgment that we are reacting to something or someone.
   b. Feelings cannot be conveyed clearly without words.
   c. It is better to suppress negative feelings for the sake of efficient interpersonal communication.
   d. Feelings and rationality are incompatible.

6. Which one of the following reasons MOST likely explains why people do not express their feelings easily?

   a. People you are talking to do not want to hear your feelings.
   b. Expressing feelings does no good for anyone in the long run.
   c. Feelings can be very complex and overwhelming at times.
   d. Most listeners are really too dense to understand expressed feelings.

7. Active or reflective listening requires the listener to

   a. remember every word the speaker says so that it can be repeated.
   b. hypothesize what it is that the speaker is concealing.
   c. succinctly paraphrase the speaker's main point(s).
   d. maintain constant eye contact so the speaker knows he is being attended to.

8. Pseudo-listening is

   a. when a person pretends to listen.
   b. when a listener is formulating his response while the speaker is talking.
   c. occurs when the listener is inattentive to the speaker.
   d. all of the above

9. A confusing meta-message is

   a. spoken in a foreign language.
   b. head nodding up and down while the person is saying "no".
   c. poor grammar.
   d. usually done unconsciously.

10. Meta-messages

   a. do not have to be spoken in actual words.
   b. can be carried in the tone of the speaker's voice.
   c. can support or distort the clarity of the primary message.
   d. all of the above

11. As a QC group facilitator the importance of your blocking "gossip" is to

   a. evaluate the truth of what a speaker is saying.
   b. not allow participants to talk about another participant when they are absent.
   c. help participants talk directly to each other.
   d. keep rumors from spreading.

12. "Super-parenting" refers to

a. participants' desire to keep everyone happy.
b. female members' tendencies for wanting everything to "go just right".
c. facilitator's tendencies to tell everyone what they should be doing.
d. facilitator's tendencies to "hover" over members interacting.

13. Invasion of privacy is

a. done by untrained QC group facilitators.
b. something a QC facilitator should not permit.
c. done by super-parenting.
d. identical to mind-raping.

14. A QC facilitator can use summarizing as a technique when

a. the group seems "stuck" on a single issue or theme.
b. another topic is appropriate for discussion.
c. bringing closure to the group's interaction.
d. all of the above

15. QC facilitators serve as "traffic-directors" for group interaction. Which one of the following is a FALSE statement about the "traffic-directing" function?

A QC group facilitator should:

a. gently encourage shy participants to contribute to the group without pushing them.
b. suppress all negative responses so that participants feel good about their QC experience.
c. redirect attention away from group dominators while respecting the contributions they have made.
d. interrupt personal questions or possible intrusions into another person's privacy.

16. Modeling as a group facilitator's function means the facilitator

a. should be a perfect example of a group participant.
b. should be well groomed and dress in the latest fashion.
c. takes full responsibility for what he or she says and is willing to listen to others.
d. is first to reveal personal details of his or her life.

17. Blocking "there-and-then" talk is

a. preventing "story telling" at the expense of productive group discussion.
b. preventing talk about "pre-Prop 13" days.
c. the same thing as blocking "gossip".
d. keeping QC participants from talking about their childhoods.

18. A meta-message

a. is a message that is not stated directly.
b. is sometimes conveyed through body language.
c. may conflict with the primary message.
d. all of the above

Key: 1-b; 2-a; 3-b; 4-d; 5-a; 6-d; 7-c; 8-d; 9-b; 10-d; 11-c; 12-a; 13-b; 14-d; 15-b; 16-c; 17-a; 18-d.

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